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THE

TRAVELLER;

OR,

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

WRITTEN

ON BOARD A MAN OF WAR.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

CONVERSE WITH THE WORLD UNSEEN.

BY JAMES MEIKLE.
Late Surgeon at Carnwath.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

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THE

LIFE

OF

MR. JAMES MEIKLE.

THERE are perhaps few persons who have perused an author's writings with much pleasure and advantage, who feel not a desire to know the character and history of one who has contributed so largely to their entertainment and instruction. The biography, therefore, of favourite authors, if not barren of incidents, or awkwardly executed, is a species of writing which will always be well received. It introduces us to familiarity with persons whom we are disposed to revere, and exhibits our instructors in the interesting light of acquaintances and friends. Besides, when we find, by authenticated records of their life, that they were good men, we sit down to the perusal of their writings with the most favourable dispositions for deriving benefit from what we read, and are edified by the pleasing persuasion that they lived as they wrote, and felt on their own hearts the inestimable value of that religion which they so clearly teach, and so warmly recommend.

The writings of few men require information respecting their author more than those of Mr. Meikle. They consist chiefly of short, detached essays, written in haste, and commonly finished at one sitting; or are a record of the impressions made on his mind at the instant by the objects with which he was surrounded, or the incidents

which had occurred. They seldom assume a didactic form, or profess a regular discussion of any particular point: they rather express the author's own persuasion and feelings on the subject, the resolutions of duty which, under their influence, he formed, or the hopes by which he was animated. A knowledge of the man becomes necessary, therefore, not only to enable us to appreciate his merits as a writer, but to qualify us for understanding many passages of his writings, or at least for entering fully into his sentiments and feelings.

How far the following account of Mr. Meikle will contribute either to the entertainment or the edification of those who may be pleased to peruse it, the writer of it is unable to predict. He can say, however, with confidence, that he has not been deficient in his inquiries respecting his author, and that although in several instances his diligence has been unsuccessful, in others it has been rewarded by discoveries which he hopes have not been unprofitable to himself, and which may through the divine blessing, be useful to others. He has presumed to affirm nothing at random, or on mere conjecture; and the principal source from which his information has been drawn, is a variety of memorandums and loose papers found in the author's own repositories.

Mr. James Meikle was born at Carnwath, a village in the upper part of Clydesdale, on the 19th of May, O. S. 1730. It was his uniform custom, during at least the last forty years of his life, to observe the anniversary of his birth; and the 30th of May, N. S. appears frequently, both in his published and manuscript papers, as a season in which he sought retirement from the world, and devoted the hours which he could command from business to grateful recollections of the care of Providence, to the review of his past life, to meditation on death, and preparation for eternity. This method of commemorating the day of his entrance on life, he justly considers as more suited to the condition of a creature who is born to die, and who expects to live after death, than the methods which are more generally in use; and he recommends it to others, from the conviction that it had not been without profit to himself.

His father, Mr. George Meikle, appears to have been a very pious, but a very poor man. He practised at

Carnwath as a surgeon and druggist; but his business at that period, in a poor and thinly-peopled country, cannot be supposed to have yielded such profits as to enable him with ease to support a family of ten children, the greater part of whom were delicate, and cut off before their aged parent. Besides, the small savings of a very insufficient income were unprofitably wasted in honest, but unsuccessful attempts to obtain possession of a considerable property in the neighbourhood of Hamilton, of which he appears to have been rightful heir; and debts were contracted which bore very heavy on him in the decline of life, when the necessities of his family increased, and, through his frequent incapacity to visit patients at a distance, his means of supplying them diminished. It cannot now serve any valuable purpose to be more particular on this subject. The estate is in the indisputable possession of another family, although the greater part of the titles are still in the possession of Mr. Meikle's descendants. It is only proper to remark, that various attempts were made by his son to recover it, which excited hopes, and issued in disappointments, to which the accurate reader of his writings will observe many allusions; and to add, that the loss or abstraction of an essential paper defeated all his attempts, till it became too late to disturb the possessor by challenging his right.

James, the subject of this Memoir, was the fifth child of the family, three sons and a daughter having been born before him. When reviewing the care of Providence over him, he remarks, that his life during infancy was often in jeopardy, and piously adopts the Psalmist's words, "I am as a wonder unto many; my praise shall be continually of thee." At the age of four, he narrowly escaped perishing in a deep well into which he had fallen; and besides, he suffered so severely, and was so enfeebled by the small-pox, measles, chincough, and other diseases incident to childhood, that it was not till the ninth year of his age that he could be sent to school. Of this early period of his life, he observes, in one of his papers, that he can recollect little, except that his parents had taught him to pray twice a-day; that he thought even his childish games would not go right with him, if he should neglect his prayers; and that therefore, when it occurred to him at play that he had omitted them, he sometimes

broke off from his companions, and after having said them, returned with more confidence to his amusements. He expresses his gratitude to his parents for their instructions, and warmly recommends it to others to teach their children to pray; but notwithstanding this symptom, as some would style it, of early piety, produced by their means, he states it as the conviction of his maturer judgment, that he had then no right notions of divine things. "I was taught to pray," he says, "and prayed, when I knew not what prayer was; but now I would not give over prayer for the universe."

At school he made considerable proficiency in his education, till the death of his teacher. A new teacher succeeded, who does not appear to have been equally attentive to his pupil, for a reason which must always have great weight with selfish men, because his parents were poor. Other employment was found for him than the lessons of the day: "I was much toiled by running his errands, which I was necessitated to do through poverty." When he afterwards reflected on this period of his life, he concluded with Solomon, that "childhood and youth are vanity," and deplored the waste of it in thoughtlessness and sin. "It can afford me," he says, "nothing but melancholy reflections, did not the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse from all sin. How many months were spent without one serious thought of God, or one prayer to the God of my life! In what scenes of vanity and folly did I spend my youth! God and my own heart were and are conscious of as much sin as might damn me, though I was preserved from any gross outbreakings. When I look back, this is a proper confession for me, "Lord, thou knowest my folly, and my sins are not hid from thee. Remember not the errors of my youth, but pardon mine iniquity, for it is great."

After he had arrived at the age of thirteen or fourteen he began to relish religion more than ever he had done before. Three things in particular are remarked by him concerning himself at this period. *First*, That, though then young, he had conceived a warm regard for the holy scriptures, and loved the duty of secret prayer. "I retired by myself, and read, and prayed; and put on resolutions to perform this heavenly duty oftener than twice a-day. So from the Psalmist's resolution I copied mine,

"As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice." *Secondly*, That the Sabbath began to become sweet to him. "From the instruction of my parents, the example of Christian neighbours, and, might I add, the grace of God within me, I had a profound veneration for the sabbath, and was displeased with the least profanation of it. O that it were so still! but I must say it with shame, I have not lived up to the love of mine espousals, the kindness of my youth." *Thirdly*, That he was often employed in religious meditation, and found inexpressible pleasure in it. "Sometimes I would have wondered to find one whistling alone by the way, thinking he had better be meditating on divine things, as I did: This sometimes was my happy exercise." In what manner, however, the gracious change which about this time took place on him was effected, nothing has been found among his papers distinctly to shew: but from some expressions employed by him, there is reason to conclude that he had no remarkable experience of legal terror. "Some," says he, "are overcome by the sweetness of religion into a love with it, as Zacheus was drawn by Christ's charming voice, so that without dread or delay he received him joyfully. "Thy word was found of me, and I did eat it, and it became the rejoicing of my heart."

He was now in his fifteenth year, and, as he expresses it, "grown to the age of thinking and choosing for himself," when, for the first time, he went "from choice" to hear a sermon by one of the ministers who had some years before separated from the communion of the established church. The sermon was remarkably blessed to him; he was led to inquire into the grounds of the Secession; and his inquiries issued in an attachment which continued undiminished through life. "From this time, being about fifteen or sixteen, I heard none else, and at last joined the Secession; and alas! that the increasing defections of the Church of Scotland, for which my heart trembles, should make me still approve of my procedure."

The following year, an event of a very afflictive kind took place, which appears to have been eminently useful to him. The hand of God inflicted a heavy stroke on the family, in the death of their eldest son, William, at the

age of twenty-five. He had been early religious; but having been educated as a surgeon, he soon removed from under the immediate inspection of his parents, and served for some years a gentlemen of that profession in Dunse, who made religion no part of his concern; and the consequence was, that his early impressions were greatly effaced by the conversation and example of those with whom he had intercourse. Having at length formed the resolution of going to sea, he went to Carnwath to take farewell of his parents. His stay having been protracted beyond his expectation or wish, they remarked with grief, the sad change which had taken place during his absence, and employed all the influence of their prayers, and of their expostulations with him, for his reformation. For some time all was without effect. Providence, however, continuing by various means to throw obstacles in the way of his going abroad, he was at length brought to see the hand of Heaven in it, and led to more serious thoughts than before. "Ephraim is an heifer; but God passed over her fair neck;" so, says his brother, "it fared with him. He began to consider his ways, to relish religion, to be conscientious in the duty of prayer; and not only was his conversation but converse changed, to the no small joy of his friends." After this happy change he began to assist his father in his business, and promised to be the joy and the support of his declining years. But the ways of God are often mysterious. He was seized with a nervous fever, which in the short space of eight days laid him silent in death, on the 19th of April, 1746. "Joy and grief," his brother remarks, "were mingled on this occasion; grief at his death, but joy that he died in such a hopeful condition." He adds, "The conversation and prayers of his Christian acquaintances who visited him during his illness, made an impression on my mind, which I hope will never be effaced."

The shock which this dispensation gave to his aged parents, may be more easily conceived than expressed. They had buried six sons, besides a daughter, and in the grave with the eldest, they now buried their hopes of comfortable support in the decline of life. James, their only remaining son, was in the 17th year of his age; promising enough indeed, but unprovided for, and incapable of assisting the family in their straits. It had for

some time been his desire to prosecute his studies with a view to the holy ministry; but the situation of his parents, did not furnish him with the means. After spending the summer in contrivances how to proceed, and in the perusal of such books as were within his reach, he formed the resolution of going to Edinburgh in the beginning of winter, along with his mother, whose presence was necessary there on account of the law-suit formerly mentioned. On his arrival, he engaged a private teacher to assist him in his studies, who, for reasons known to himself, after receiving his money, chose within a few weeks suddenly to leave the place; and being unable to engage another, he found it necessary to return to Carnwath, leaving his mother behind him, and disappointed for the present in his favorite object.

A greater calamity succeeded. He had not been long at home, before his father was seized with a violent fit of asthma, which carried him off in a few days, in the month of February, 1748; and before he had opportunity to inform his mother, and elder sister who had gone to visit her, of his illness.

The shattered remains of the family, deprived of their last support, after spending sometime in unavailing grief, and melancholy reflections on the destitute condition to which they were reduced, removed to Edinburgh before Whitsunday; "but with what money," says Mr. Meikle, "will scarcely be believed; with little more than sufficient to pay carriage, and bear our charges by the way." God however, raised up a friend to aid them in their necessity. "A gentlewoman who lived next door to us, who had been a daughter of many afflictions, but to whom they had been sanctified, and who spent much of her time in prayer, showed us no little kindness." By the humane attentions of this lady, and the industry of Mrs. Meikle and her elder daughter, who span or sowed as they found employment, the few wants of the family were supplied during the summer.

But James had now entered the 19th year of his age, with little education, and without an occupation by which he could earn his daily bread. His mind was still directed towards the holy ministry, and eagerly bent on acquiring the education which he deemed necessary as a preparation for it; but Providence seemed to refuse his services

in the gospel, by defeating all his attempts to enter the university. For some time he flattered himself with the hope of obtaining a *bursary*, or, as it is styled in England, an *exhibition*: and he considered it as already secured by the generous exertions of a gentleman who took an interest in his affairs, when an unexpected objection was started against him, which blasted all his prospects. Party prejudices were strong at that time against those who had separated from the established church, and he was refused the busary because he was a Seceder.

Despairing now of getting forward in his education, and yet unwilling to abandon his favourite pursuit, he felt ashamed of his situation, in the 19th year of his age, poor, in health, and yet doing nothing for his own maintenance; and he confesses, that when any old acquaintance inquired how he was employed, he often wist not what to say. Yet he was not absolutely idle. "All the summer," he says, "I spent amongst my books in a melancholy solitude, and contracted acquaintance with very few." As a species of recreation from the severer studies in which he was engaged, he amused himself with an attempt to versify the book of Job, and proceeded as far as the twentieth chapter; but, "on a second reading I found it," he says, "so flat, and tending rather to obscure than to illustrate the beauties of that noble book, that I never transcribed it. Notwithstanding, I found a double advantage from my labor; for, first, I spent many hours with pleasure, which I might otherwise have spent in repining thoughts at the providence of God; and, secondly, I grew much better acquainted with the book of Job, a book greatly adapted to my situation, than I could have grown by an ordinary reading." It appears, indeed, that the pleasure he found at this period in writing of divine things in verse, gave occasion to that custom of versifying his meditations, in which he persevered to the very close of life, and which has produced a number of metrical performances which is truly astonishing; many hundreds of poems, all on religious subjects, and, sufficient to fill six or seven volumes of the size of the present, being found amongst his papers.

This melancholy period of extreme poverty, disappointment, and anxious suspense, continued with little variation during the whole of the ensuing year. Providence

deprived the family of the friend whose humane attentions have been already mentioned. Besides, after their expectations of a speedy and favorable termination of the law-suit had been considerably raised, they were dashed at once to the ground by a decision which put their hopes of relief from that quarter more distant than ever. "Like the sinning Jews," he says, "we expected much, but it came to little; for it was entirely cut off, till better proof could be brought that it was not prescribed." So low, indeed were their circumstances, that at Whitsunday, 1749, they found it a matter of the greatest difficulty to procure a decent lodging of two apartments, because they could neither find caution to the landlord, nor, as is customary when caution cannot be found, lay down one half of the rent. Yet when they were brought low, God helped them. They were enabled to endure their afflictions without murmuring at the divine dispensations; and besides, they were seasonably relieved by the sympathizing liberality of some good Christians, who, Mr. Meikle remarks, increased the favor by the truly delicate and Christian manner in which they confered it.

With regard to himself, Mr. Meikle observes, that although he was unable to enter the university, he found means occasionally to receive instruction from private teachers; and that the adversity of this period of his life was blessed to him for spiritual good. He expresses his warmest gratitude to God for three things in particular; first, that his proud spirit, which at first rose against the idea of dependence on the charity of others, was brought down to submission and thankfulness; secondly, that amidst his difficulties, he was enabled to resist solicitations to go to the Indies, where he would have been removed from the means of grace, and where the friend who urged him to go was soon cut off by the unhealthiness of the climate; and, thirdly, that when he met with some old acquaintances who had come to town to study at the university, he was enabled to hold his peace, neither envying prosperity, nor daring to dispute the conduct of Providence towards himself. His soul prospered when outward things were adverse. He took much pleasure in prayer, and statedly performed the duty four times a-day: "This," adds he, "I say, not out of vain glory, but to stir up those who have much leisure and opportunity to

abound in this delightful and profitable exercise." And he remarks, as the result of his own happy experience at this time, "that sanctified affliction, the chastisement of our heavenly Father, is no small mercy to them that are rightly exercised thereby; that it is honied affliction which brings the soul nearer to God; and that (alluding to Hos. ii. 14.) it is God's way, in the time of melancholy solitude, to speak comfortably to the soul." Yet his spiritual prosperity was not without alloy; for he complains bitterly of the motions of sin within him, and remarks with grief, that for some part of this time he did not live so near to God as he ought.

At the beginning of the winter, 1749, finding his inability to enter the literary classes of the university as great as ever, and satisfied that it was his duty to submit to what appeared to be the will of Providence, and take some measures for his future maintenance, he formed the resolution of commencing the study of medicine: yet not, he says, as his ultimate object, but as a means of helping him forward, if it should be the will of God, by the profits of his practice, in his main design of entering into the sacred office. The different professors of medicine, to whom it appears his father had been known, displayed great generosity in giving him liberty to attend their lectures without payment of the customary fees; yet even with this advantage, he could not avoid contracting some small debts which his circumstances did not enable him for several years to discharge.

As a student of medicine, he now entered on a new scene, and became exposed to temptations from which he had hitherto been free. "I was afraid of forgetting God my Saviour, as I was to change my savoury solitude for a correspondence with an indifferent sort of youths; but I still kept up the form of religion as usual, what of the power I dare not say." "My fellow-students, some of whom were gentlemen of fortune, were obliging to me, and gave me access at pleasure to their books; though otherwise their company was by no means to be desired, as they were accustomed to swear in conversation."—He adds afterwards, "I was grieved at the oaths I heard, for my conscience was then tender: O that it were tender still!"

How long Mr. Meikle studied medicine, and when he commenced practice as a surgeon, cannot be ascertained,

as his papers for some years about this period have unhappily fallen by. It is probable that he removed to his native village of Carnwath, towards the close of the year 1750, where he continued to act as a surgeon till the spring of 1758. Two loose papers have been found, from which this is concluded. The one, written in the Latin language, and styled *Petitio ad Deum*, 1750, leads to the conclusion, that when he wrote it, he had formed the resolution of practising as a temporary expedient, but had not yet carried it into effect. It is, as far as its meaning can now be collected, to the following effect: "Conscious of sin, deserving and fearing divine wrath, but hoping for salvation through the blood of Christ, I have formerly made, and now again make known to thee, O God! the inmost thoughts and desires of my heart; and trusting that thou wilt graciously answer, intreat thee to hear and grant these my requests. 1. Look on me with favour, for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord, in whom thou art well pleased, and preserve me from every thing secret or public, which is offensive to thee. 2. As I will, through thy good providence, have arrived at a majority at the commencement of the ensuing summer, enable me to recollect with lively gratitude thy past care of me, and prosper me in what I propose at Carnwath, that it may be subservient to my main design. 3. * * * 4. Deal with me as it pleases thee, in respect of riches, and all other temporal good things; only grant me a place amongst thy sanctified ones, and I am content. 5. I most earnestly request that I may be honoured to serve thee in the gospel, preaching the words of truth and eternal life to my fellow-sinners all the days of my life. Hear me, I pray thee, and answer me in thy time." The other paper, which contains a confession of sins, and a dedication of himself anew to God, is dated Dec. 15, 1750, and contains this petition: "I seek thy direction in my business, and in my present views. O grant thy blessing, while I give the glory of all to thee!" from which it is conjectured, that he had begun business as a surgeon, while his views were still directed to the ministry as his great aim in life.

The reference which has just now been made to these papers, suggests the propriety of remarking, that it was Mr. Meikle's custom occasionally to set apart a day, or a

part of a day, to solemn meditation, self-examination, and prayer; and that on such occasions he wrote down, as a means of fixing his mind, the heads of what at the time principally engaged his thoughts. This he did not merely when at home, but as often as he could find opportunity, with sufficient secresy, when abroad. Thus, during the years he was at sea, we find him repeatedly engaged in this manner, in the fields near Plymouth, on a retired part of the rock of Gibralter, in a forest between Leghorn and Pisa, in Italy, and in a solitary spot of the island of St. Helena. Many of these loose papers have been found, which it would swell this account of him too much to transcribe. Part of one of them, however, is here subjoined as a specimen, and because, after those which have been referred to, it is the first distinct notice of him, after his removal from Edinburgh to Carnwath. It runs thus:

"Under a sense of my sins and unmerited mercies, I desire through grace, in sincerity and humility of soul, to approach to the author of all my mercies, and to lay before thee, O merciful Father! all my designs, desiring thy divine direction.

"And in the first place, I confess mine own sins, the sins of my family and people, the sins of Church and state. I desire to be humbled under my natural proneness to evil and aversion to good for my many sinful thoughts, which thou, O Lord, knowest: for my wrong conceptions of the great Jehovah, and the smallness of my holy fear when in his presence, calling on him before whom all the earth should tremble. I also desire to be humbled for my limiting God, as if he were not Almighty; for not placing all my faith and hope on him alone, but on appearances and probabilities; for my ingratitude to God for his many matchless mercies to me in feeding and clothing me, and giving me favour in the eyes of men with whom I had to do. Providence has never failed me, but ay supplied me; yet in the time of prosperity I sinned, and joined with sinners in their follies, which now I lament, and desire to be humbled for; as also under the stroke of my younger sister's death. O to learn the language of thy rod!

"O Lord! I lament my detention from thy ordinan-

ces;* and O that thou wouldest cast my lot so (not that I prescribe to God) that I may serve thee in thy temple day and night! I desire to be humbled for all my prevailing lusts and passions; for my spiritual pride, ignorance of the things of God, barrenness under the gospel, lukewarmness about the things of Christ; and for my carelessness about religious duties, so that while the love of Christ should constrain me, custom leads me. Ah! that ever I should doubt the good will of him that dwelt in the bush, and forget the day when he heard my cry and delivered me out of the hand of my fierce afflictions, manifesting his mighty power.† I desire to be humbled for my earthly mindedness and my desires after temporal things, riches, honour, and glory, which perish and pass away. I desire to be humbled for my breach of former engagements, and for that great mountain of sins accumulated on me since the last time I was before thee in this manner." * * *

"And now I desire to lay before thee my petitions. And first of all, O to be daily getting nearer and nearer thee; to be growing more and more acquainted with lovely Jesus, the light of the higher house, increasing more and more in grace, becoming more and more like thee, and daily less conformed to the world; to be delighting more and more in spiritual things, given more and more to meditation on the glory to be revealed, loving him more and more who loved me! O to be delighting in God all the day long, living in his fear as before him always, learning more and more submission to his disposals in providence, and more and more persuaded of the rectitude of his will, the equity of his law, the longness of his patience, and his care of his own. O to get the better of prevailing sin, and that which easily besets me.

"O Lord! I lay another petition before thee, and beg thou wilt hear it. O let me come into thy service (in the ministry) and breathe my last under thy colours, a volunteer; and to this end I beg a blessing on all my studies. O Lord! hear me.

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* Carnwath is at a great distance from Davie's Dyke, in the parish of Cambusnethan, where Mr. Meikle then attended public worship, and the necessary calls of business often prevented his attendance, even when the distance and weather would not have done it.

†He had lately before been dangerously ill; and, besides, had laboured under great dejection of soul.

"Also, I lay before thee my design of courtship with M. R. If she be thine, one in whom the fear of God is, may she be mine, if for thy glory and my good. Grant me direction in this matter, and give me favour in her eyes.*

"O prosper me in my business! Thy blessing be on my endeavours for the health and cure of thy creatures. Let never the greed of money get a hold of my heart; keep me from covetousness, and all wrong ends in following my business. Bless, Lord, the work of my hands.

"May thy bounty so provide for me, as that I may not harm the world, or die in their debt. I hope thou wilt hear.

"Never let any apprentice or servant dwell in my house, who shall never dwell with thee; and let not the love of money make me choose the workers of iniquity to be with me.

"O look on Zion, Zion that is thine own! Remember thy promise, O God! and do her good. Heal her great breach† for thy name's sake.

"Cause peace, concord, and love, to be in my family like a little river, and thy fear like a mighty stream.

"Now, O Lord, in the hope that thou wilt hear, I lay all my petitions before thee. Choose what thou wilt, cast away what thou wilt, I will be content. I commit myself to thee. I take thee as before, for my God and Father, for my Saviour, for my sanctifier for ever. To all my former engagements I again subscribe, begging that thou wouldest provide for me, so that I may attend thine ordidances. O hear! And I desire in truth, O terrible Jehovah! to call these heavens over my head, the hills and mountains about me, the growing grass and corn, to be witnesses, that I this day subscribe with my hand to be, through good report and bad report, thine, even thine. Amen, amen. So be it.

July, 1752. JAMES MEIKLE."

It is evident from this paper, that a year and a half

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* The death of this young woman some time after gave him great distress. He speaks afterwards with the fullest confidence of her piety.

† Thedivision which had latel y before taken place in the Secession.

after he had begun business as a surgeon, his original resolution of employing his business only as a temporary expedient to help him forward to the ministry, remained unaltered. Nor did he finally abandon this design till the year 1763, some time after his return from the navy. This was the constant subject of his prayers; this excited him to application to his business; to this his private studies were uniformly directed. Poverty distressed him, chiefly because it obstructed his progress; success in business elated him, only as it revived his languishing hopes of attaining the summit of his ambition. His heart was in divinity, while he practised surgery. It escaped not the observation of his pastor, the Rev. David Horn, that he had never seen a person take so little pleasure in discoursing on subjects connected with his own line of business; and he himself remarks it as an evidence of the care of God, that, notwithstanding his eagerness to acquire by his business, as a surgeon, what would enable him to devote his time to divinity and the previous studies, he was never permitted to exceed in his charges for medicine or attendance, in order the sooner to gain his object.

It may here be as proper, therefore, as any where else, to inqure into the ideas which he had of that office which he was so anxious to fill; and into the motives which excited him so eagerly to desire it. Happily two papers have been found in his hand-writing which serve to illustrate his views. The first is dated Carnwath, July 20, 1755, and begins thus: "O Lord! conscious of the levity of mind I am vexed with, my soon wearying in religious exercises, and my great unfitness for the weighty work of the ministry, I desire to be humbled, and to implore thy kindness, and in the sincerity of my heart to lay before thee my motives and my resolutions." After stating various important considerations which moved him to desire to be employed in the work of the ministry, he adds these memorable words: "As I feel a constant opposition in me to all that is holy and divine, I desire to be chained, as it were, by office to religion, and by a close exercise therein, and, breathing after communion with God, to get, through his grace, the antipathy in my heart against what is good dispelled, as far as my militant state can allow of." His resolutions are, that if God should

put him into the ministry, he would, through good and bad report, follow Christ; would be willing to be the meanest of his servants; would not take it ill though he were despised, reproached, persecuted for Christ's sake; and was determined to preach, not for vulgar applause, but to advance his glory, and to promote the welfare of souls. "I lay my account," he adds, "with hardships, inconveniences, troubles, and mockings from the world, and the men of the world. Nor is it in view of profit or honor that I desire to change my occupation, for by kind providence I am now as well as I can wish; but I would fain be poor for Christ's sake, who, though he was rich, for my sake became poor, that I through his poverty might be made rich. I shall never be surprised to find all winds blow against me, and every thing blasted in my temporal estate; it shall be my joy, if the cause of God and the gospel prosper in my hands. And finally, I resolve to be honest to the trust committed to me, and in all things, to act not only as before thee, but as one that must give an account of my stewardship, that I may do it with joy." He concludes: "Receive this mite into thy mighty treasury, O Lord! and grant my request; and I beg of thee that thou wouldest bless me with a sound judgment, clear insight into the things of God, a strong memory, and with every faculty to fit me for so great a work."

The other paper, which was written some years after, consists of two parts—the one, a list of all the scriptural qualifications of a gospel-minister, arranged in order, that by it he might be guided in self-examination and prayer—the other, a series of advices respecting the conduct proper to be pursued by a minister of the gospel, written with the evident intention of assisting his own mind in weighing the importance and duties of the office to which he aspired. As these advices not only shew how conscientious he was in his views, but contain hints which may be profitable to those whom God has put into the ministry, they are here subjoined.

"Contract not much carnal acquaintance.

"Learn to be abused without becoming angry.

"Meddle not much with the affairs of this life.

"Argue coolly, and from conscience, not for victory.

"Affect not a shew of sanctimony before men.

"Be not ashamed of piety in any company.

"Whatever else thou readest, read a double portion in the scriptures of truth.

"Shun familiarity with the men of the world, else celestial truths, as uttered by thee, will be contemned.

"Care not much about thine own reputation, so truth and the gospel suffer not.

"Learn daily more of Christ and more of thyself, else thy other studies will profit little.

"Seek not great things for thyself, seek not great approbation, great applause, great conveniences, or a great income; but seek great things for Christ, seek to him great glory, many converts, and much fruits of righteousness.

"Consider the preciousness of souls, the value of salvation, the weight of the sacred charge, the terrors of the Almighty, the awful day of account, and thine own utter inability—then shalt thou have no vain confidence, but depend on God alone.

"Please all men in the truth, but wound not the truth to please any.

"Set thy affections on things above, so shall spiritual things be thy delight, and not thy burden.

"In company, always study to drop something for edification, and so in a manner preach occasionally, as well as statedly.

"Be much with God in secret, so shall God be with thee in public.

"See that the carriage of every one in thy family be a pattern to all observers, and not matter of reproach, to the joy of enemies.

"Let thy charge be continually on thy mind, and not only pray with them in public, and from house to house, but carry them to thy closet, and pray for them in private.

"Neglect not to visit them at all proper times, but especially embrace those golden opportunities, sickness and affliction.

"Have a fellow-feeling with the sufferings of all thy flock.

"Let thy conversation be uniform; and what thou preachest on Sabbath, practise through the week.

"Not only press charity on the wealthy, but let thy example, according to thy power, shew the way.

"Rather lend thine ear to reproaches than applauses: the first may let us see some foible or failing with which we are chargeable; but the last is very apt to kindle self-conceit, of which every one has enough.

"Act the Christian even in eating and drinking; and be not, when at a feast, though temperate at other times, a glutton or a wine-bibber.

"With respect to thy charge consider that thou art made the steward of a family, and therefore must, seeing the great Master allows it, provide food for all, flesh for the strong, and milk for the weak. See that the worship of God be set up in all families, and performed twice a-day, and that parents instruct their children in private prayer, to say grace at meat, and to keep the Sabbath. See that the rising generation under thy care grow in knowledge, and be well acquainted with the scriptures. Be well acquainted with the knowledge and conversation of every one that is admitted to the Lord's table.

"Keep an exact list or catalogue of thy charge; who is pious or profligate, knowing or ignorant, in affluence or exigence, in health or sick; and read it often.

"Give a pleasant ear to the commendations of others, but always frown away the friend that would commend thee to thy face.

"Be sparing in producing specimens of thy learning, or criticisms on the words in the original especially before the unlearned; for a nice grammarian may be but a novice in the gospel.

"In preaching, aim at God's glory and the good of souls; and then, without deviating from that rule, please all men as much as possible.

"Let thy sermons be always the fruit of much study and application; and never dare to serve God or his people with that which cost thee nought.

"Never be bigotted to thine own opinions, or interpretations of particular texts, lest, in establishing them, thou be seeking after thine own fame; but if the thoughts of others be as orthodox and consonant to the analogy of faith, if it be necessary for peace sake, acquiesce in them.

"Never shew a fondness for new doctrines, which among Christians, are little better than new gods were

among the Israelites; but contend earnestly for the faith once (and but once, because sufficiently) delivered to the saints in the scriptures of truth; and still walk in that way which, though very old, is very good."

Such were the views which Mr. Meikle had formed to himself of the nature, importance, and duties of the ministerial office, and of the qualifications necessary for the proper discharge of it; and so conscientious and upright does he appear to have been in the motives by which he was influenced to aspire at the honour of filling it. Yet though possessed of talents also, which, if properly cultivated, might have fitted him for great usefulness in the church, it pleased God, who chooses whom he will to carry forward the designs of his grace, to decline his offers of service in the gospel. Providence continued, from the first moment that he formed the design, to hedge up his way by one means or another, so that he could not find his desired path, till at length he abandoned the attempt, and became satisfied that it was enough that it had been in his heart to build the house of the Lord. The obstructions which prevented his progress in the earlier part of his life, have been already stated; the following narrative will sufficiently detail those which succeeded and finally disappointed his hopes.

When he began the study of medicine, and afterwards commenced business it was, only, as has been mentioned, as a secondary object. He hoped, by a few years practice, to save as much money as would support him and the family during the course of his studies for the ministry; but after making the trial he found this impracticable. When he went to Carnwath, he had nothing; he was even somewhat in debt. His mother and two sisters were left behind in Edinburgh till his prospect of success should justify their removal; and, in the mean while, he resided for twelve months in a mean house, without a servant, and almost without furniture. His diligence and frugality soon placed him in such circumstances, that he ventured, in the course of the year 1751, to move to a different house, and bring the family to reside with him; but the expence of furniture, the charge of the family's maintenance, the distress and death of his younger sister by severe disorder with which he was himself attacked, and which for some time threatened his life, together

with the narrowness of his income, left him, at the close of the year 1753, considerably in debt, and as incapable of prosecuting his favorite purpose as at any preceding period.

It was perhaps this concurrence of circumstances, adverse in themselves, and discouraging with respect to his future views, which in part occasioned a dejection of spirits under which he labored about this time, and which it does not appear that he ever experienced in any great degree at any future period of life. The duration of his distress of mind, and the particular manner in which it afflicted him, cannot now, owing to the loss of a few leaves of manuscript, be known. It appears, however, that his spiritual gloom was suddenly dispelled, and that the apprehensions of divine indignation with which he was assailed, gave place to holy serenity and joy. "The light of God's countenance beamed again on my soul, as I was walking alone from church, and made my wandering thoughts return to him as their centre, and the rest of my soul; so I went on rejoicing." On the review of his condition, he found that he had himself only to blame for the distress which he had suffered; for "he had not prized the presence of God which for some time he remarkably enjoyed, nor improved those happy moments as he should have done. He had, besides, indulged in spiritual pride and carnal security; not looking narrowly lest any unobserved sins might provoke God to frown on him, boasting that his mountain was established, and resting more on the bliss of enjoyment, than on him whom he enjoyed."

For some time after this, outward matters assumed a more promising appearance. His business increased; he was enabled to discharge some troublesome debts; and he began to entertain the hope of soon abandoning surgery for divinity. In a little, however, the clouds returned after the rain; he was seized with trouble of body, and this again was succeeded by distress of circumstances.

Towards the end of January, 1755, he felt himself one day much indisposed, but went about business as usual. "I slept," says he, "at the house of an acquaintance who was always dear to me, his discourse ever edifying, and his prayers like one of those who are already on the

borders of the better country, into which he soon after entered. I was very uneasy during the night, and still more so next day; but I got home, though with difficulty, not being willing to be absent from my own house, either in sickness or in death. I immediately took to bed, being seized with a bad fever. Now, thought I, I am perhaps to die, and shall die in debt, and leave my family destitute. But what I lamented most was, that I should sleep in silence, and not serve the Lord in the land of the living, nor execute the designs which I had formed for the advancement of his glory. These thoughts tossed my weak spirits much; but my eternal concerns gave me no uneasiness; for I can say, that at that time I could commit my spirit into the hands of the God of truth, my gracious Redeemer, knowing in whom I had believed. Thus visited by my acquaintances, I continued till about the 13th or 15th day of the fever, when these words of the 118th psalm, "I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord," were, as it were, audibly spoken to me between sleeping and waking; and my faith helped me to lay hold thereon, so that my fears fled, and I was no more sad. Praises then dwelt on my faultering tongue, and I spake within myself to God, what moment I had respite from the disease, yea, I told my sister, when weeping at my bed-side, that I should not die. From the 20th day I began to amend. I now thought that my life, in a double respect, belonged to God, who had redeemed me from going down to the grave, and resolved, if he should be pleased to accept of me, to devote the remainder of my days to his service in the gospel, and to arrange my affairs so as to begin my studies next Martinmas."

Before Martinmas came, however, new difficulties occurred to obstruct his design. This was the more afflicting, because he could not exculpate himself from having involved himself in them by his own imprudence. His debts were diminishing, his business increasing, and, had he had no further views than continuance in business, he found himself, on the 20th of July,* "by the kindness of Providence, as well as he could wish. But he hastily aspired at conveniences which he ought for a while to have declined; for, finding it disagreeable to be changing his habitation, as he had done every season, he purchased a

* See p. 27.

small house in the village, and thus increased his debts. This was not all; when he took possession of it at Whitsunday, 1756, some repairs became absolutely necessary to render it habitable; and though a small sum must have been sufficient for the purchase and reparation of a thatched house, yet it was more than he could afford without borrowing, and it led to embarrassments which ultimately defeated his intention of prosecuting his studies. "I cannot help thinking that I erred, for I should have essayed to build the temple of the Lord, before I chose to sit in mine own house."

It were tedious to enter into a minute detail of the embarrassments and distresses of the following year. Some of his creditors became impatient, and took legal steps to enforce payment. He examined the state of his affairs, and found that his property considerably exceeded his debts; but he had imprudently locked it up, and was unable to raise what was necessary to satisfy their demands. The idea of bankruptcy was terrible to him; "for," says he, "the name of honesty was always dear to me; and I cannot excuse people's becoming bankrupt, unless some great loss or series of misfortunes have befallen them;" but how to escape it, occasioned him many anxious and perplexing thoughts. At last, after satisfying the most clamorous of his creditors, by giving to some full, and to others partial payment, he resolved, May 1757, on committing the management of his property, which was more than sufficient to answer all demands, on him, to a friend, and betake himself to sea.

It was not without much serious deliberation that he formed this resolution. By continuing in Carnwath, he suspected he could never attain the object which he had so long in view; "for," says he, "although I could live very well, yet, without demanding higher prices than my patients were able to afford, I could not clear my debts, and lay up any thing for attending the university, and studying divinity." Resolving, therefore, to make another effort to attain his grand object, he sat down, and weighed the arguments in favour of going to sea and against it, that he might satisfy his conscience respecting what was his duty. His reasonings, as stated by himself, were after this manner: *Pro.* "Have I not engaged to use every effort to get forward to the ministry?" *Contra.* "I have, and am determined, though I remain at home,

not to desist."—*Pro.* "What method, then, shall now be taken to forward this intention?" *Contra.* "None that is sinful."—*Pro.* "But is it sinful to go aboard a man of war as a surgeon?" *Contra.* "Not positively, but it may be so by consequence."—*Pro.* "How so?" *Contra.* "Because, by going, I shall throw myself into bad company, expose myself to hear the sacred name profaned, and see the Sabbath broken, cast myself out of the church, and neither enjoy ordinances, nor the fellowship of the godly." *Pro.* "I grant it; but I can say that I propose to do this not out of choice, nor directly for gain. I will study to reprove vice, and may have opportunity to do good. O grant it, though it were but to one soul! I shall have a separate place in the ship, and will study to keep it as close as possible, that I may not be grieved with hearing and seeing wickedness, nor tempted to commit it. And as for sermons, except a few in summer, I much oftener want than enjoy them, here where I am: may I have God's presence."—*Contra.* "But what moves me to go?" *Pro.* "To get the means of going forward to the ministry, to prepare myself for it, to pursue my studies with this view, and to have occasion and subject for some divine meditations.

Having thus satisfied his conscience respecting the step he was to take, he accepted of an offer made him to be surgeon to a ship which traded to the coast of Guinea. Every thing in his opinion was prepared, and already he had taken farewell of many of his friends, when, on the day previous to his intended departure, the 5th of July, 1757, Providence blasted his design. He had paid off almost all his creditors, as fast as his accounts came in. There was nothing to give him uneasiness except one bill, and this his agent had agreed to manage for him, having ample security for repayment in the property which was left behind; but the creditor took alarm at his going abroad, affected to distrust the agent who was to manage his affairs in his absence, and laid him under arrest. Not a friend to whom he applied would advance the money for him, or even become his surety. In this emergency, it became necessary to part with what money he had reserved for defraying the expences of his journey to England; and "when the day came which," says he, "I but not God, had appointed," he found himself compelled to remain at home.

How greatly he must have been mortified by disappointment, attended with circumstances of such publicity, it is easy to conceive. It is more interesting to remark with what Christian temper he bore it. During the tumult of his passions, he wrote Med. XI. of "Solitude Sweetened." In which, after reviewing the providence of God, expressing his faith in the divine wisdom and care, and rejoicing in the hope of eternal life, he breaks out in triumph: "I shall yet see his kindness large as my faith, and his mercy measure with my widest expectations;" and prays, "May I never get the desire of my heart but with God's blessing, nor the request of my lips but with his good will. After writing this Meditation, he remarks that he was easy in mind, and dropped for the present the idea of going abroad; and when he reflected on his duty to his friends who had abandoned him in his distress, "I could not," he says, "but forgive them, and even cease in mine own mind to be angry at them."

It was not long before he became satisfied that he had not acted wisely in accepting of a place in a Guinea ship, and that God had dealt kindly in restraining him from countenancing a trade, on the iniquity of which he had not sufficiently reflected. As, however, no other method occured by which he could extricate himself from the embarrassments of his situation, and be enabled to prosecute his studies, he still entertained thoughts of going to sea, and in the month of December resolved on entering the Royal Navy. It was time of war, and a situation as surgeon's mate was easily procured. Before he left home, he endeavoured, as before, to satisfy his conscience respecting the lawfulness of his scheme, and drew up a series of resolutions respecting the line of conduct which he was determined to pursue. One of the considerations which determined him to persist in going to sea, is too memorable, in consequence of the publication of this volume, and a former, entitled "Solitude Sweetened," to be omitted: "That if I shall write any thing for the support of virtue, or the suppression of vice, dated from the watery element, it may be read by some whose curiosity might incline them to look into what they would never seek after for the sake of the subject." His resolutions are expressed thus:

"Through thine all-assisting grace, I desire before thee, O God, to humble my soul on account of my sins, and to seek thy blessing and thy countenance in the way that I go, that it may be well with my soul. And through thy grace, distrusting myself, and looking to thee alone for strength to perform them, I desire to lay down my solemn promises before thine omnisciency, that in time coming this paper may be a remembrancer to me.

1. "I resolve to make this only an opportunity to help me forward in my great design, and not the employment of my life.

2. "I promise and resolve, through grace, not to neglect secret prayer and reading of the scriptures, in the same manner as I have done at home.

3. "I promise through the strength of grace, not to be ashamed of religion, but to espouse it in all its despised purity, and to strive against the stream of general irreligion and depravity.

4. "I promise and resolve, through grace to abstain from all appearance of evil, and to shun every occasion of sin, as none knows how great a matter a small spark may kindle.

5. "I promise and resolve not to wink at sin in others, but rather expose its ugly appearance, that my conversation may shine spotless before the sons of vice.

6. "I shall remark the good hand of my God upon me in all his kind providences, with silence and resignation under all his disposals.

7. "I shall employ my time, my pen, and the talents thou hast given me, in matters of importance for God's glory and the good of souls; and therefore beg thy kind assistance for this end.

8. "I shall, through grace, study to keep an equal frame of mind in every state, in adversity to be thankful, in prosperity humble, and in all conditions to live to thy praise; and still to remember, that no change of circumstances will release me from my obligation to the above particulars: as a sign of which, through grace, and before thee, I subjoin my name,

JAMES MEIKLE."

Towards the close of December, he left Carnwath for Leith, from which he was to sail in one of the King's

ships appointed as convoy to the trade; but his trunk, through the negligence of the person who had charge of it, did not arrive in time, and he was again disappointed. Another convoy was not expected to sail for two months; he was afraid lest a residence so long in Edinburgh or Leith might exhaust his little stock of money; and it became necessary for him to return to Carnwath. This was to him a source of new distress. His acquaintances in jest welcomed him on his return from foreign places; and some of them insinuated, that neither formerly, nor at this time, had he any serious intention of going to sea, but that he only gave it out as a stratagem to obtain payment of his accounts. Suspected by some, ridiculed by others, almost without employment, and doubting in his own mind what these continued disappointments could mean; he studied submission to the will of God,* and spent two melancholy months waiting for an opportunity to depart. At length, on the 10th of March, 1758, he left Carnwath once more, and the next week embarked on board the Arcturus tender for London. After passing at Surgeon's Hall, he received an appointment from the Navy-Office, of second surgeon's mate to the Portland, a fifty gun ship, and set out immediately for Portsmouth on foot. Although he could have reached that place on the evening of Saturday, the 29th of April, he preferred halting at a village within ten miles of it till the morning of the following Monday, "not daring," he says, "to join such company on such a day," and judging it more proper to devote the last Sabbath which perhaps for some time he should spend on shore to those religious exercises which his circumstances particularly required. That he might not be exposed to interruption, he retired into the fields, took his bible, paper, pen, and ink, along with him, and spent the day "pleasantly," he says, "praying that he might above all things be preserved in his new situation from sin and vice, and committing his friend at home to the guidance of Providence." In these fields he wrote the ninth meditation in this volume, the perusal of which will give the reader some idea of the manner in which he was employed.

* See Solitude Sweetened, Med. vi. ix. xxxix.

Mr. Meikle had scarcely entered the ship, when he was confounded at the discovery of a degree of wickedness, of which it does not appear that he had ever before formed any conception. "It exceeded," he says, "all belief, and I soon concluded that here I could not stay." His journals are every where filled with complaints of the abandoned conduct both of the officers and crew. Their vile habit of profane swearing, their contempt of the Sabbath, their drunkenness, and gross and undisguised debauchery, were a continual source of distress to him during the four years that he continued on board. "I believe," says he, in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Horn, "the demoniacs in the gospel were never more under the devil's power than many of these men are, whether we look to their lives or their language." His righteous soul was so vexed from day to day with their filthy conversation and unlawful deeds, that it preyed on his spirits, and threatened to affect his health. "This day," says he, July 7, 1753, "when I took a serious survey of the wickedness practised around me, when I saw all fear of God cast off, heard them on the morning of the Lord's day swearing, and singing obscene songs, and observed the ship's boats bringing lewd women aboard, no respect being paid to the holy Sabbath which God has set for a sign between the Christian world and himself, yea the very shame of sin being gone, I was filled with vexation, grief, and, might I say, holy indignation, till my breast ached, and I was pained at my very heart."

It was not merely compassion for the poor wretches themselves that occasioned Mr. Meikle such distress. He trembled for himself. Some of his wicked companions had been educated religiously; when he reproved them, they replied to his reproofs, that ere long he would not be so squeamish, and quoted examples to convince him that he would soon be reconciled to their manners, and adopt them as his own. "These," says he, "were terrifying thoughts to me. They led me to reflect seriously on my own vileness and my own weakness, and to fly to the divine promise, with resolution to keep out of the way of sin, lest, as they predicted, I should be ensnared, and become as one of them." It did not satisfy his conscience that he abstained from their vices; he dreaded the effect of witnessing their wickedness in lessening his detestation

of sin, and strengthening the depraved inclinations of his heart. "One thing," says he, in a letter to a friend, "which I fear, is, lest the frequent sight of sin diminish that abhorrence of it which I should always entertain. Sin, the oftener it is committed, is the more aggravated, and so the sight of it should become the more grievous to me; and can I say that I have sustained no injury, if I begin, through familiarity with it, to hate it less than before? Sometimes I reflect how under the law the touch of a dead body, or any unclean thing, though accidentally or unwittingly, made the person ceremonially unclean; and hence infer, that the very hearing, seeing, and knowing of sin, considering the corruption that remains within us, renders us unclean, especially, if by grace in vigorous exercise, a real detestation of the sin be not kindled in the soul, and a proper sorrow wrought there for the dishonour done to the Most High. Now, dear sir, you see my critical situation; pray for me."

Amidst the dangers with which he was surrounded, Mr. Meikle put his trust in God. It comforted him, he says, that the Lord, who delivered just Lot, knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations; and that if he should not answer his prayers by delivering him from this situation of danger, he would do it, by making his grace sufficient for him, and his strength perfect in weakness. It was to him according to his faith. "Though the wicked," he says, "gave me grief without, yet God comforted me, and was the joy of my soul." And again he expresses himself thus: "Woe is me, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips! O the unclean things that the unclean lips convey to us, if not to our heart to defile us, yet to our ear to disquiet us! Yet I have God to bless that I was, as it were, saved by fire, purified even by means of sin—a mystery I never knew before; for the more of their sin I saw, the more I hated it, and was made to deplore the fountain of all, original guilt."

Had it not been for the wickedness of those on board the Portland, Mr. Meikle would have felt no desire for some time to change his situation in life. He kept his health; he was satisfied with his pay; he had a birth to himself and the first mate, who was a quiet, inoffensive, but irreligious lad, and gave him little disturbance; and

the officers of the ship treated him with politeness. His character appears, during the whole period of his continuance at sea, to have commanded the respect of his ungodly companions. They sometimes ridiculed him indeed for his strictness; yet he remarks, "Though they were wicked, I had their favour, which my fellow mate had not." They desisted, on more occasions than one, from sports on the Sabbath which were disagreeable to him; and took it in good part when he reproved some of them very sharply for their vices. In consequence of his honest endeavours for their benefit, some of them even confessed and lamented their folly, and put themselves under restraint for a while. Their fickle resolutions, it is true, were commonly soon broken, "yet," says he, "I never gave over now and then to reprove, though I sometimes had little thanks for it, not knowing when God might give the blessing;" and though he could not boast of being the means of the conversion of any of them, he had the comfort of doing his duty, correcting some abuses, and preserving the esteem even of those who would not be reformed. After he had been three years on board, he could write to his sister thus: "Abstracting from their wickedness, and surely, when we see transgressors we should be grieved, my situation is singularly happy; for there is not an officer aboard but is ready to oblige me, and to do any thing to serve me."

The happiness which Mr. Meikle experienced when at sea, did not result only or chiefly from the favour of man. He had pleasures of a superior kind; the transcendant happiness of fellowship with God, joy and peace in believing, and assured hopes of eternal life. "Whatever God shall do with me here," he says in his journal, July, 28, 1758, "yet I know that I shall praise him among assembled elders, and serve him before the throne among those who are made priests and kings to him forever and ever." And about a year after he writes to his sister in the following words: "I may say from experience, that religion sweetens all places and all conditions; and that the man who sets his love on God, need not live alone, though far from all his friends and acquaintances. God rules always best for his people, and a cheerful submission to the divine disposal is our duty; and when frank, and full, and from the heart, how pleasant is it!" Indeed, almost every one

of the meditations in "Solitude Sweetened," and "the Traveller," which were written at sea, might be quoted in proof of the very flourishing state of religion in his soul.

The religion of Mr. Meikle was not the religion of an indolent man. He kept himself, he tells us, pretty close in his birth, except when his duty called him on deck: for the horrid oaths which were continually bandied about on it, often drove him down sooner than he intended; but he filled up every moment of his time in some useful or at least innocent employment. As a specimen of his almost incredible diligence, take the following summary of his occupations from the first of May to the end of December, 1758. Let it be remembered at the same time, that during this period the Portland was sent on three different secret expeditions to the coast of France, to St. Maloes, to Cherburg and to St. Cas'bay; that much time must have been occupied in the embarkation and disembarkation of troops, much confusion occasioned by the multitude on board, and much additional duty necessarily laid on the surgeons by the number of wounded men under their charge. Yet during this busy period, Mr. Meikle found leisure to compose a paraphrase on the Song of Solomon in verse, and "the Christian Compass," a paraphrase on the 119 Psalm, each of which would fill a considerable volume; besides a great variety of occasional poems. A small tract against the lewdness and debauchery so common in the Navy, and a considerable treatise, which may perhaps afterwards be published, entitled "A Word in Time of Need, or a few Thoughts in Honour of Religion," were written by him within the same space of time. To these must be added, his journal, and his diary for these eight months, and all the meditations in "the Traveller," and "Solitude Sweetened," corresponding to this date.

Yet though he wrote so much, he did not neglect reading, and other religious duties. "I began," he says, June, 1758, "to prize time more than ever I had done before, and studied to get up by four in the morning; but sometimes slept longer."* "Now the scriptures were sweeter to me than ever (July 7, 1758;)and the method I pursued was, in the morning first to pray, lest any thing should dis-

* See Solitude Sweetened, Med. xlvi.

turb me afterwards; then to read one chapter in the Old, and another in the New Testament, and then a psalm in the metre version. At twelve o'clock I prayed again, and again at four. At night I read a chapter in both testaments, and another psalm, and then prayed, which I postponed till the lights were put out, as then I was least disturbed. This I mention, not as matter of boasting, for my prayers may humble, rather than elate me, but to signify how sweet I then found living near God to be, and to be in the exercise of commanded duty."

While Mr. Meikle was occupying himself in this truly Christian manner, the Portland received orders to proceed to Gibralter, as convoy to the trade, and thence down the Mediterranean as far as Leghorn. After encountering some hard gales, which drove them back three several times, they left England on the 20th Jan. 1759, reached Gibralter on the 21st of February, halted about ten days at that place, and arrived at Leghorn on the 25th of March, having narrowly escaped a French fleet which had sailed from Toulon with a view to intercept them.

During the voyage, Mr. Meikle repeatedly remarks the divine kindness to his soul, and the many sweet hours which he enjoyed in delightful intercourse with the God of his salvation. The Sabbath in particular was to him a day of spiritual joy. It was his custom distinctly to note it, both in his journal of ordinary occurrences, and in his diary, in which he recorded his observations on the events of providence and the state of his soul, for two reasons; first, lest in a situation in which there was no distinction made between it and other days of the week, he should forget the return of the day of sacred rest; and, secondly, because, says he, "I chose to mark how it fared with me on that day in particular, and always made my request to God the evening before, that it might be a good day to my soul." And though he often laments his exclusion from the public ordinances of religion, and the great difficulty which he found in devoting the Sabbath as he ought to the service of God in private; yet, amidst these disadvantages, there is reason to believe that he enjoyed as much of the presence of God, and tasted as much of the joys of paradise upon it, as ever he did at any other period of his life.

At Leghorn, he had occasion to remark the interposition of Providence in a very singular manner in his behalf. Several of the gentlemen belonging to the ship had formed a party in order to visit the city of Pisa, which is not more than twelve miles distant, and entertain themselves with the sight of its famous hanging tower, and the other curiosities of the place. Mr. Meikle, starting in the morning of the 12th of April, went on foot by himself, and enjoyed, he says, by the way, "pleasant meditations on the love of Christ;" the rest followed on horseback. The afternoon was far advanced before they had sufficiently gratified their curiosity. In the evening Mr. Meikle's companions returned; but he, being fatigued, and observing that the wind was foul, so that the fleet which the Portland was to convoy could not sail, ventured to remain in Pisa. Early next morning, he set out for Leghorn; but the wind had changed during the night, and before he could reach the city, the fleet had weighed, and were already several leagues on their way.

By this occurrence he was thrown into inconceivable perplexity. In a strange place, ignorant of the language, with no clothes except what were on his body, with little money in his pocket, without one personal acquaintance, and even few Englishmen being left in the place to take interest in the distresses of their countrymen; afraid, besides, of the fate of his papers and other property on board, of the loss of what was due to him on the ship's books, and of being detained long before he could find an opportunity of getting home; what was to be done? In his distress he applied to the English Consul; but every expedient suggested by him and some others whom he consulted, misgave.

After thus spending the remainder of Friday, and the whole of Saturday, in fruitless contrivances how to extricate himself from the embarrassments of his situation, the Sabbath came, on which he resolved as much as possible to banish care, and to commit himself to God. It was his custom, when an enemy appeared, or when at any time he went ashore, to put his Bible in his pocket, that in any event he might not be deprived of the consolation which the perusal of it is calculated to afford: and on this occasion he remarks that "he was so happy as to have along with him his dear companion, the Bible." Early

on the morning, therefore, of the 15th of April, he retired to a forest which lay a considerable way out of town on the road to Pisa, and spent the day in devotional exercises. He sung the sixty-third Psalm, "a psalm written in a wilderness, which," says he, "gave me great comfort in my wilderness." He read the hundred and second Psalm, which "well suits the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." He engaged repeatedly in prayer, and in meditation on God and the dispensations of his providence towards his people, and himself in particular. As the day advanced, the wind sprung up, and it began to rain. He took shelter from the storm in the trunk of a hollow tree, and standing within it, wrote the following lines, which are inserted, not for any excellence in the poetry, but because of the circumstances in which they were composed, and to shew the temper of his mind on this trying occasion.

"THE CONFIDENCE OF THE SOLITARY EXILE;

Written in a Forest between Leghorn and Pisa, April 15, 1759.

"A stranger in a foreign land,
I throw myself on thee:
There's help in that Almighty hand
That made both land and sea.

"Though far from friends, and far from home,
I am not far from God;
He will not stand aloof; he'll come,
And surely do me good.

"Upon thy pow'r, Lord, I will lean;
Why should I bound thy ways?
Thy pow'r the hardest things can bring
To pass with greatest ease.

"Oft have I seen thy former love,
Still will I trust in thee;
Thou cans't not cease from heav'n above
Kindly to look on me.

"How to relieve thou always know'st,
Thou art as wise as true;

And what infinite wisdom plans,
Infinite pow'r can do.

"Why doubt my Father's love? for though
His providence now frown,
To me with kindness overflow
His word and ways each one.

"The world is thine; and every where
Thour't present, O most High!
I cast myself upon thy care;
I on thy word rely."

After the rain ceased, he drew nearer the city, and reclining on a bank, wrote a few verses; but the wind still blowing high, the evening growing chill, and he himself becoming faint, for he had tasted nothing all that day but a draught of cold water, and eaten little the day before, he returned to the city. Calling at a house to which he was kindly invited, he had not sat long before information was brought him that the English fleet had been driven back by contrary winds, and were arrived in the roads. Animated by this delightful, but unexpected intelligence of an event which so evidently marked the care of Providence, he made all possible haste towards the shore; but it was late, it blew hard, and it was morning before he could get aboard. As he rowed towards the ship, it fell calmer, the wind became fair, the signal for sailing was hoisted; and within two hours after he entered the Portland, the fleet were under way with a fair wind and a fresh gale.

How ignorant are we of the gracious intention of events, of which at the moment we are disposed to complain! The wind which chilled him, and the rain which drove him for shelter into the trunk of a tree, were the instruments of his deliverance. "This interposition of Providence for me," he says, "was astonishing; that God should send a contrary gust of wind out of his treasuries, and turn a whole fleet out of their intended course for one poor worm! and, whenever that end was accomplished, ordered a fair wind to blow, so that we were obliged to put back no more." It appears to have struck even the thoughtless sailors with surprize; for they hail-

ed him as he approached the vessel, in their rough and irreligious manner, "Come along you praying d—l;" adding, that the winds would not permit them to leave Leghorn without him.

His first care was to acknowledge God. "I had pleasant reflections," he says, "on the sudden and sweet change which Providence had made in my circumstances. The other day I was in a forest in Italy, solitary, left behind, and friendless; but now in my own ship, and already many leagues advanced in our intended voyage." Amidst the glow of gratitude which he felt for his deliverance, he wrote, April 18, the following lines:

"Awake, each grateful thought, and sing
The Lord's o'er-ruling hand;
For thee concern'd, th' Eternal King
See, and astonish'd stand!

"Heav'n's host might well engross his care,
Angelic ev'ry form;
Yet strange! see him on earth prepare
His way to bless a *worm!*

"At his command, the billows swell,
The winds impetuous blow,
And veer about, and quick fulfil
His kind designs below.

"I cannot praise thee as I should—
With gratitude inspire;
I cannot praise thee as I would—
Accept the faint desire.

"Thy kindness I will ne'er forget;
But *there* astonish'd gaze,
And all my life on earth will set
Apart to shew thy praise."

After a prosperous voyage, the fleet arrived at Gibraltar, about the middle of May; but the Portland, instead of proceeding homeward, was ordered in a few weeks to join Admiral Boscawen, off Toulon, and continued cruizing in the Mediterranean till the month of August. This

was a serious disappointment to Mr. Meikle. He was impatient to get home, in order to pursue his intended studies. He was beyond expression disgusted at the wickedness practised around him, which his utmost exertions were unable to restrain, and which, in spite of himself, he was obliged to witness; and no consideration of emolument could make him pleased with the prospect of being doomed, for another season, to associate with wretches, the greater part of whom neither feared God, nor regarded man. The crew rejoiced in some prizes they had made, and in the prospect of more during their cruize; but to Mr. Meikle, these were objects of little moment. He considered the divine providence, of the goodness of which he had so large experience, "as a never-failing treasure, a bank out of which the necessities of all the people of God are supplied." He submitted to that as an affliction which gave them joy, and felt inexpressibly happy in being enabled to believe, that what to sense and reason appeared so adverse, "was certainly well done towards him, being," he says, "the disposal of my best and dearest friend." "This happy frame of spirit," he adds, "and quietness of mind, which is only his gift, this resignation to his holy will, and confident dependence on his providence and fatherly care, I accounted a greater prize than though I had shared ten thousand pounds."

Before they sailed, Mr. Meikle, on the 7th of June, got ashore, climbed privately the south side of the rock, and spent the greater part of the day in prayer and fasting, "pouring out to God," he says, "my confession and complaint." In that sultry spot, he had "no shelter but the rocks, no covering but the heavens: but God was very gracious to him; "the naked rock was to me," he says, "like Bethel, God's house, where God was pleased to meet with me."

During their cruize, we find him sometimes rejoicing, sometimes complaining. "Vain thoughts rising within me," he says, on one occasion, "made it a melancholy day; yet I thereby learned to depend more on all-sufficient grace and the divine promise, than on the manifestation; and I was led to see my own nothingness if God should withdraw but for a moment. The ensuing Sabbath, God, who is rich in mercy, returned to my soul with his

loving-kindness, and made me triumph in him; yet was I vexed with melancholy thoughts, springing from cursed unbelief, how it might fare with my friends at home." "The God of never failing mercy," says he, on another occasion, "was gracious to my soul this day, yet I thought, and verily believed, that none who ever tasted that God is gracious, had such a multitude of vain thoughts as I was troubled with." Again, "not only sinners without, but sin within, vexed me this day, yet God was good and gracious to me." And again, "this day I was satisfied with streams of the same overflowing river that had refreshed me often before; but wickedness swelled about me to an incredible degree, so that I was weary of my life."

The fleet under Boscawen had not long returned to Gibraltar, before information was received that M. de la Clue, with the French fleet, were passing the Gut. They immediately pursued, overtook the French next day, and gained, on the 18th of August, a signal victory, taking three ships of the line, and destroying two. The particulars of this engagement belong to the history of the country, rather than of Mr. Meikle. It is enough here to observe, that the Portland was five hours engaged, and lost a considerable number of men; that she narrowly escaped being blown up by a six-pound cartridge of gunpowder, which blew up at the very door of the fore powder magazine; that Mr. Meikle sat composedly during the chase, writing Meditation C. of this volume, till the drum called all hands to quarters; and that during the heat of the engagement, when, in consequence of the blowing up of the cartridge, he expected to go down to the deep in a moment; with a serenity of mind, the thought of which long after refreshed him, he committed his soul to God.* He also remarks with gratitude to his preserver, that, while in one of the ships, a surgeon, and a surgeon's mate, lost a leg each, he escaped; and observes that he felt indescribable horror on reflection at the scene, stunned with the noise of great guns, pierced with the groans of the wounded, whose pains he was unable to relieve, besmeared with human blood, and surrounded with the dying and the dead.

* See Secret Survey, Sept. 14, 1670.

It added considerably to Mr. Meikle's duty during the engagement and afterwards, that the first mate had been put ashore at Gibraltar, ill of the scurvy, and never returned to the ship. In other respects, he accounted this a happiness. Though a quiet lad, yet being a stranger to religion, his conversation had often distressed him, and his company deprived him of that liberty which he desired for religious exercises. Now, however, he had the birth for himself; and as he was soon after promoted to the rank of first mate, and the place of second mate continued vacant during the remainder of his time at sea, he enjoyed advantages to which he had formerly been a stranger. One of the first uses which he made of this change in his situation, was to take two of the ship's boys into his birth, and to endeavour to train them to the knowledge and practice of religion; and though those whom he first took under his charge run off from the ship as soon as they reached England, he appears to have persevered in the practice as long as he continued on board.

The Portland, and some other ships, being ordered home with the prisoners, and to be repaired, Mr. Meikle reached Spithead on the 16th of September. His first business was to write the Admiralty, that he might be superseded. "I could willingly," he says, "have continued to serve my country in my mean station, in defence of our religion and liberties, had what I daily saw and heard been tolerable for me; but their wickedness made me weary of my life." "The poor wretches who had been preserved from death in the late engagement, instead of rendering to the Lord according to his goodness, gave themselves up to all manner of sin. In their sin, I saw the corruption of fallen nature; for though many unrenewed men break not out into the same excess of riot, yet till the saving change commence, the heart is in all the same; and I trembled lest their example should lead me to look on sin with less abhorrence than before."

The necessities of the service, however, obliged the Admiralty to refuse his petition; but he was promoted to the rank of first mate. They put to sea, therefore, on the 22d of October, for the coast of France; and on this voyage, as formerly, he tasted much of the pleasure of true religion. "November the 4th, being Sabbath," he observes, "was a day of refreshing to my soul; I was

helped, not out of a stoical stupidity, but being convinced of the equity and noble ends, though to me unknown of God's doings, from the heart to welcome all that had befallen me, and keep silence because HE had done it." And, Jan. 27, 1760, he exclaims, "O what sweetness my soul enjoyed this day in his presence, even a foretaste of that happiness which refreshes the hosts above. I was made rather to magnify God in all his ways, than murmur at any of his doings."

While on the coast of France, they had two very prodential escapes. The Portland, and the other five ships of inferior force, were employed in watching a fleet of transports, intended for the invasion of England, when the signal was made for an enemy. They slipt their cables and pursued, supposing the fleet they descried at a distance to be merchantmen or transports. Already they were within a few leagues of the enemy, when, to their confusion, they found that they were running into the jaws of the Brest fleet, commanded by Marshal Conflans. They attempted to fly, but with scarce a hope of escaping. The Portland, which sailed very indifferently since she was last repaired, was within reach of the enemy's shot, and expecting every moment the order to strike, when a man on the mast-head, announced a fleet bearing down before the wind. Signals appeared at the same instant flying in the French fleet, and in a little they altered their course. It was the British fleet under Hawke which now hove in sight. Every heart on board the Portland was joy; she turned to join in the pursuit of her pursuers; and by the evening of that day, Nov. 20, 1759, one of the greatest naval victories was gained which adorn the annals of Britain.

The remains of the French fleet took shelter in the river Vilaine, and the Portland was stationed on the coast along with some other ships, to prevent their escape. While on this duty, they were assaulted by a dreadful tempest on the 1st of Jan. 1760; and the ship drove. One anchor was broken off by the fluke, another through the middle of the stalk; but when they were almost on shore, and all on board expected to perish, the sheet-anchor was let go, which brought the vessel up, so that she rode out the storm.

While Mr. Meikle remarked these, and many other less striking circumstances in the course of divine providence, his soul mourned in secret over the insensibility of his companions, whom neither judgments could terrify, nor mercies allure. A paper has been found in his own hand-writing, which, in the most feeling manner, expresses the anguish of his heart on their account, and will supercede the necessity of a more particular detail. It has no regular connection of sentences, but seems to have been written occasionally during the ship's continuance on the coast of France, when his mind was at any time more than usually impressed with the view of their wickedness; and afterwards written out on Sept. 7, 1760, immediately after their return to Plymouth from that station, when, in the fields near that place, he devoted a day to prayer and fasting on their account and his own. It runs thus:

"Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar.

"My soul is among fierce lions, though they are sons of men; for their words are spears and darts, and their tongues are a sharp sword.

"O how those who should live like expectants of glory, resemble the damned in hell!

"Where is the honour of thy name, which by every tongue is continually blasphemed?

"How often would the loss of an organ have a little relieved the anguish of my mind, and the sleep of death shut out the mournful scene!

"Who can enough extol the patience of God! But who can be enough astonished at the impenitence of man, who still goes on in sin!

"Whence shall I fetch floods of tears to weep over my demented acquaintances, who are hastening to hell, yet believe it not?

"Surely my dwelling is in the suburbs of hell, where I hear the blasphemies of the damned!

"The lips that should daily praise thee, are daily speaking perverse things; the tongues that should talk aloud of thy righteousness, are set on fire of hell.

"Where, in the day of judgment, where shall these poor souls appear? and whither will they cause their shame to go?

"Ye saints! ye little know what a life your children lead when far from you, however well they may have been brought up.

"Surely sinners come nearer to the devils in their wickedness, than saints to the angels in their sanctity; yet a glorious change awaits the one, but a fearful end the other.

"When shall my silent Sabbaths pass away, so that I may praise the God of Zion in the Zion of God?

"How melancholy to dwell with those whom death at last shall part, to meet no more in one society again!

"Now it is proper that I pray for them, mourn over, and deplore them; for in a little their state will eternally forbid it, and my state eternally forbear it.

"How might one see, and not be greatly afflicted, nations conquered, kings dethroned, prisoners pass in thousands, and multitudes go to be broken on the wheel! But who can see numbers of fellow-creatures daring the thunders of the Almighty, provoking his vengeance, and plunging into everlasting flames, and not be pained to the very heart!

"Surely the society of the wicked is the academy of hell, where vice is taught, if not by precept, yet by practice, and some times by both.

"Every morning my sorrow returns upon me, and my anguish recoils with every fresh reflection.

"How dangerous is the company of the wicked! for though they should not prevail on us to commit sin, yet their often committing it in our sight is ready to blunt the edge of our detestation, and allay the vigour of our abhorrence of it.

"Were men as stupid about the things of this life as they are about the world to come, they would be a burden to society, and useless in their generation. How deplorable is it, then, that they should be only prudent in matters, not of the last, but of the least importance, and that even those who otherwise are indolent, should perpetrate sin with the greatest activity!

When neither judgments nor mercies, promises nor threatenings, patience nor examples of vengeance can prevail, nothing can let them see their folly till awakened by the flames of hell, when it will be too late.

"Revolutions here* have advantaged me nothing, for it was still from bad to worse."

Immediately after their arrival from the coast of France, Mr. Meikle began to write what he styles "A Secret Survey into the State of the Soul," the principal articles of which have been published in the first volume of his works. To this, therefore, the reader is henceforth referred for information respecting his religious views and feelings. It is proper, however, to observe, that he did not satisfy himself with watching over the state of his own soul, and bewailing the wickedness of his companions. He still, as prudence dictated, continued to reprove and warn them. He still privately continued to instruct and counsel the boys whom he had taken under his charge. Besides, he spent many hours, during the greater part of the year, 1760, in conversation and prayer with a young gentleman belonging to the ship, who had fallen under strong convictions, and suffered very singular horror of conscience; a minute narrative of whose case has been found among his papers; but the issue of which, whether in a gracious change or not, Mr. Meikle could never learn, as the ship was ordered to sea soon after the gentleman left it, and he could never afterwards obtain any information concerning him.†

While lying at Plymouth, Mr. Meikle bethought himself of a new expedient for the benefit of his companions. Seizing a favourable moment, when some of the midshipmen had conducted themselves so ill as to be turned off, he prevailed on a few of those who remained, to enter into a solemn engagement respecting their future behaviour; and that he might not scare them, limited the obligation to the period of one month, expecting doubtless, if his attempt should succeed, to obtain their concurrence to a renewal of the engagement, or to the adoption of some similar rules. The original is in Mr. Meikle's handwriting, and is subscribed by other three persons. As it will be deemed by those who are acquainted with the prevailing manners of the navy, a curiosity, and happily il-

* Since he joined the ship, besides changes among the inferior officers, they had three captains. The chaplain was so very wicked, that he had been expelled the ship!

† This Narrative may perhaps appear in the remaining volume of Mr. Meikle's Works.

lustrates, not only his zeal, but his prudence, in adapting the regulations to the circumstances of those for whose benefit they were devised, an exact copy is subjoined:

On board the Portland, Jan. 3, 1761.

We the underwritten, subscribe to observe the following Rules.

I. "That none of us shall swear, or even mention the divine name, but when in reading it occurs.

II. "That we shall say grace before and after meat by turns, or every one for himself.

III. "That every morning and night we shall read a portion of scripture.

IV. "That none of us shall sing obscene songs, or talk about lewd women.

V. "That our table-discourse shall be improving, innocent and merry.

VI. "That we shall keep the Sabbath strictly, not in telling idle tales, or vain discourse; but shall read the Bible and good books by turns, while the rest hear.

VII. "Good books to be put into the foremost birth every Saturday night, and nobody to come into the aftermost birth on Sunday, but the former inhabitants.

VIII. "That, on account of patients, every night at six o'clock, the aftermost birth be evacuated.

IX. "No lewd women shall be admitted into either birth.

X. "That we will not play at cards or any game for money, but at cards at no rate.

XI. "That no dispute be carried on too far; but when passion begins to appear, it shall be dropped.

XII. "That no new midshipman be admitted into the mess.

XIII. "That none of us reveal our rules to any on board.

XIV. "That this continue a month in force.

XV. "That the breach of any of the above rules by any of us, dissolves all.

"To the above we set our hands.

(Subscribed) "JAMES ATKIN,
"HUGH FERGUS,
"JAMES NELSON,
"JAMES MEIKLE."

How long these regulations were kept, or what salutary effects they had in the reformation of the subscribers, is not known. Mr. Meikle often complains in his diary of the short continuance of good impressions on the hearts of those with whom he remonstrated, of their breach of pious resolutions, of their goodness being like the early cloud, and of many of them returning like the dog to his vomit. Grieved at their conduct, he became more and more anxious to be released from his bondage. With this view, he wrote to the Navy-Office in September, and again in November, 1760, but in both instances was refused; and afterwards, with no better success, attempted to exchange with a surgeon's mate whose ship was to be paid off. Two considerations besides those already mentioned, increased his desire to get home. He had received the greater part of his pay, and, "with great joy, sent home as much as would clear all debts," both those which he had left behind him, and those which, since his departure, had been contracted for the support of his aged mother, of whose decease he had lately before received information; so that the great impediment to his studies was removed out of the way. And besides, he had in some instances been unwatchful—had suffered his passion to get the mastery over him, in one instance, when he thought himself ill-used—and in another, when in company with the officers of the ship, "had drank more wine than enough, which rendered him unfit for every duty incumbent on him." "O how dangerous," he cries, "is it to dwell among the wicked!" and, conscious of his infirmity, he longed to get out of the way of temptations before which he was apt to fall.

In the month of March, 1761, the Portland sailed for the Island of St. Helena, as convoy to the outward bound East-India fleet, halted for some time at Madeira, on her passage out, and reached St. Helena, in the beginning of June. She returned with the homeward-bound fleet, and reached the Downs, by the end of September.

During this voyage, Mr. Meikle persevered in his usual diligence. Besides his stated religious exercises formerly mentioned, he wrote many Poems and Meditations.* He

*He wrote also, when at sea, some small tracts, against profane swearing, and other vices, but at what particular period cannot be ascertained.

applied himself also very diligently to the study of the Hebrew language, and completed the reading of the Pentateuch before he reached England. The state of his soul may in part be learned by consulting the "Secret Survey." The following short extracts will serve further to show it. "April 5. I had reason to say that God's love is like the ocean, his goodness like the floods, and that he is graciously near to all that call on him." "May 3, was to my soul a good day; and though the iniquity of my heels overtook me, the God of my mercy prevented me, which made me sing of the freeness of grace." "On the 17th, he kindly opened the stores of his goodness, and made my soul delight itself in fatness." "On the 24th, the wanderings of my heart were very grievious. O when shall my complaint cease!" He went ashore at St. Helena, on the 8th of June, wandered to a considerable distance into the country, and devoted the day in solitude to self examination and prayer. "But O what a black life mine was, when narrowly surveyed, when by meditation it was, as it were, taken to pieces. Though the world could say but little, conscience could say a great deal." "July 12, was Sabbath, and though busy for a considerable part of the day among the sick, yet God remembered me in my wilderness, and watered my desart. I found that to be allowed to live near God is the sweetest life in the world, and sweetens every condition."

The scurvy and dysentery raged on board the ship during the voyage home, to such a degree, that they lost twenty-six men, and at one period had sixty-five sick. Although the fatigue of duty must have been great, Mr. Meikle remarks with gratitude to God, that except during a few days when he felt what is styled the prickly heat, he retained his health. They narrowly escaped, near the island Fernandez de Noronha, being captured by a French fleet which were watching for them, by altering their course during the night; and on the night of the 6th of September, they were mercifully preserved in a storm, though a thunderbolt struck their main top-mast, broke it in pieces, and stunned several of the people.

The ship went into dock after their arrival, and again Mr. Meikle applied to the Navy-Board without success. On the 25th of November, they sailed for Lisbon, and returned to Spithead on the 1st of February, 1762, bring-

ing home the Earl of Bristol, the British ambassador at the court of Spain. The moment he arrived, he renewed his application to the Board, and, to his inexpressible joy, obtained his request; "for which," says he, "I bless the Hearer of prayer, and magnify his name." As soon as he could arrange his affairs, he left the ship, hasted to London, and took ship for Berwick, whence he travelled on foot to Edinburgh, "which," says he, "when I saw, I thanked God, and took courage."

At Carnwath, were he arrived on the 24th of March, he thought himself, he says, in a new world. No oaths assaulted his ears; by many religion was professed, and prayer performed; at Biggar, within eight miles of his residence, he had regular access to hear the gospel; and he found in his neighbourhood, godly men with whom he deemed it a happiness to have it in his power to associate. His Sabbaths, in particular, were very different from those of the four preceding years. "It was a sweet day," says he, speaking of one of his first Sabbaths at home; "no disturbance, but from a wandering heart. I was afraid that I was not so thankful as I ought to be." On his road to church on a subsequent one, "I had pleasure," he says, "in meditation. The sermon was divine and edifying. O pleasant situation! but O ungrateful I!"

The object which he had had so long at heart now occupied his attention; but a series of adverse occurrences had put the attainment of it for so many years out of his reach, that now when he possessed the means of prosecuting his studies for the ministry, he began to hestitate concerning what was his duty. He took the advice of several of the most judicious of his friends, and in particular of the Rev. John Patison, the venerable predecessor of the writer of this Narrative; and the result was, that considering how long Providence had obstructed his views; that he had already spent thirty-three years of his life, and several more must necessarily elapse before, according to the rules of the religious society of which he was a member, he could obtain license to preach the gospel; and moreover, that his organs of speech did not promise that he would ever be able to speak so as to meet with general acceptance, it was his duty to abandon his intention, and to endeavour to serve God and his generation by the diligent application of his talents to the du-

ties of the station in which he was placed. He did so, and was respectable and useful during life as a surgeon. Though Providence thus refused the aid of his tongue to promote the interests of the gospel, yet his pen was never unoccupied in private in this glorious work; and it is hoped, that now since he is gone to a better world, his pious example, which it is the business of these sheets to record, and his pious writings, which the writer of this accounts it his honour to have been the means of introducing to public notice, will long continue to plead the cause of that God whom he served, and to refresh the souls of many who are precious in his sight.

In the private station of a country surgeon, the uniformity of Mr. Meikle's life furnishes hence forward, few incidents which are of sufficient importance to merit a detail. The history of religion in his soul is, besides, recorded with sufficient minuteness in the "Secret Survey," in the "Meditations," written after this period, and in the "Monthly Memorial," which together form an uninterrupted chain of information concerning him from the period when he left the navy, to the 2d of December, 1799, within five days of his decease. A less circumstantial account, therefore, of the latter period of his life is deemed sufficient.

Although Mr. Meikle did not immediately abandon the great object which he had so long at heart, he was pushed into business as a surgeon by the zeal of his friends soon after he arrived at Carnwath, in 1762. When he afterwards found that this was to be the employment of his life, he regreted, that, owing to the preponderance of a different subject of study, he had devoted less of his attention to the study of surgery and medicine than he ought, and resolved to do what in him lay to repair his error. With this view, he not only gave attention to reading in the line of his profession, but arranged matters so that, without material injury to his business, he spent some months of the summer of 1764, in Edinburgh, in the study of midwifery, and some other branches of science.

With what ability he discharged the duties of his station, the writer of this has no sufficient means of knowledge. He finds, from some hints in Mr. Meikle's papers, that the tongue of slander, in several cases, reproached

him for the manner in which he had treated patients;* and in particular, that he had suffered exquisite distress from the malevolent insinuations of a person from whom he had reason to expect different treatment, respecting his conduct to his only and much-beloved sister, the last but himself of his father's family, who had kept house with him since his return to his native place, and who was cut off by a fever in the month of March, 1770. One thing, however, is certain, that if some have practised with greater skill, none ever did so with greater uprightness of intention, and few, very few indeed, with as religious a dependance on God for his blessing on the means which he used for the health and cure of his fellow-creatures, and with as conscientious and lively a concern for both their temporal and spiritual welfare. "I desire," says he, "to bear my patients on my mind; they are my charge; and I always implore a blessing on the means: for the apparently dying, I make much supplications in secret." From his memorandums it appears, that before he undertook any operation which he deemed difficult, he applied to God in secret for direction and aid; and many a prayer stands recorded in his papers for the souls of those whom he has considered as dangerously ill. What religious family would not prefer such assistance in distress, to that of irreligious persons, of greater celebrity in the medical world!

Mr. Meikle devoted many of his leisure hours, during the first ten or twelve years after his settlement in Carnwath, to the revision of the papers which he had written at sea, or at an earlier period. He transcribed "The Traveller," which occupies the greater part of this volume; the greater part of "Solitude Sweetened," which was formerly published; and "A Word in Time of Need, which may hereafter appear. He likewise transcribed "The Christian's Compass; Poems on the 119th Psalm," a volume of 340 pages; "The Traveller Entertained; or, Poems by Sea and Land;" and "The Sacramental Table; or, Poems on Redeeming Love;" each of which, with the subsequent additions, would make a volume equally large. Within the same space, he transcribed a considerable part of "The Christian; Spiritual Poems

* Solitude Sweetened, Med. XVIII. refers to one of these cases.

on several Subjects, relating to the Conduct of Providence, and Cases of the Soul, in Four parts." To this he afterwards made many additions, and, entertaining serious designs of publishing it in four small volumes, he first took a voyage to London, June, 1790, to offer it to the booksellers, and afterwards proposed to print it by subscription at home; but his design in both instances misgave, for this reason, among others, that he resolutely determined that the volumes should appear without a name. To this collection of his poetical writings must be added, "The House of Mourning" which has been printed; "The Divine Epithalamium, or Song of Songs, Paraphrased," a volume formerly mentioned; "A Poetical Present for a Bridegroom and Bride;" "Emmanuel;" "Amœnitates; or, Mercies Acknowledged;" and, "Heaven;" each considerable pamphlets, besides some smaller peices.

The number and bulk of these manuscripts is such, that the truth would not be exceeded, had it been said that, instead of six or seven volumes, as formerly mentioned, they would fill eight volumes similar to the present. Of the publication of them, however, there is little prospect. The public taste for poetry is nice. It will not endure mediocrity; and Mr. Meikle's verse, though always pious, has seldom those flights of fancy which are often conspicuous even in his prose writings, or that smoothness of versification which is now, by the greater part, deemed an essential qualification of poetical compositions. It is indeed to be regretted, that Mr. Meikle appears to have been fonder of his poetical than of his prose compositions, and devoted so much of that time which he so highly valued, to a species of writing in which he less excelled. If, instead of this, he had cultivated his talents for writing in prose, the Christian world, indebted as they are to him, would have been laid under still deeper obligations by perhaps several volumes, equal or superior to those which he has left for their edification.

It has already been noticed, that in the year 1770, he lost his only sister, and that his grief for her loss was embittered by the tongue of malice, which ascribed it to his want of skill or of care. In what manner this mournful event affected him, may be seen by consulting "The Monthly Memorial," and "Secret Survey," at the proper dates. When he afterwards sat down, and surveyed the

dreary solitude in which he was left, his grief flowed anew, and he cried out, "O eternity! all my near relatives are swallowed up in thee, and in a little I myself also shall be no more." It was assuaged, however, by the consideration of the divine wisdom, and of his interest in the divine love and care. "O happy, not they who are not afflicted, but they who have such a friend in their afflictions as I."

His afflictions do not appear, either on this or on any other occasion, to have slackened, but rather to have quickened his progress in the divine life. He continued strict in the observance of religious duties, and in watchfulness over his own heart. He persevered in an accurate and even minute observation of the conduct of divine providence, as "The Monthly Memorial," every where shews with regard to others, and the "Secret Survey," with regard to himself. He frequently, as in the earlier period of his life, devoted a day or a portion of a day to solemn humiliations, self-examination and prayer; and occasionally, when he had a family, kept family-fasts, the reasons of several of which, have been found among his papers, and might have been inserted, were not this account extending to too great a length. The Sabbath, in particular, was the joy of his heart. He made it his study to visit his patients, except in cases of emergency, either before or after the hours of public worship; and rather than be detained from church when he did not apprehend inconvenience or danger by delaying his visit, risked incurring the displeasure of his employers, and the consequent loss of employment. Distinct notices are found among his papers of almost every Sabbath, from the year 1762, to the day of his death, and of the manner in which it was employed, whether at Church, in visiting the sick, or at home; besides lists of all the texts which he heard discoursed on during that period, often with the principal heads of discourse, and occasionally with brief hints of the frame of his soul while hearing them.

Mr. Meikle had a heart too warmly interested in the cause of Christ, to be able to look with indifference on what was passing around him in the Christian world. His private papers record almost every occurrence in his neighbourhood which was calculated either to afflict or gladden the hearts of the Godly; the death of faithful

ministers, the feuds of Christian societies, the scandalous conduct of professors, and the propagation of error, on the one hand; and the reformation of the abandoned, the apparent success of a gospel-ministry, and attempts to advance the interests of religion, on the other. They are so particular, indeed, that prudence requires their suppression.

It was under the influence of this spirit of holy zeal, that in the year 1777, he composed and prepared for the press, a considerable treatise which has been found among his manuscripts, in reply to the Rev. Dr. Dalgliesh of Peebles. That gentleman had rashly stated some ideas respecting the Sonship of Christ, and attempted to support them by means of a crude theory of animalcular generation which excited very general alarm among the Godly in this country. His book has since sunk into deserved oblivion; but while it yet lived, it was attacked, and with success by a host of adversaries. How it happened that Mr. Meikle never published his answer, though it was prepared for the press, is unknown. His modesty in wishing to conceal his name, and his diffidence lest he should err in writing on so mysterious a subject, it is probable, occasioned him to procrastinate, till others had got the start of him, and he deemed his answer unnecessary. "I intend," says he, August 19, 1777, "great secrecy, and I am full of trembling lest I should err against the truth which I would defend. O to be guided of God, and to give God the glory!"

After the death of his sister, Mr. Meikle found, in a greater degree than formerly, the necessity of entering into the marriage-state. He had made several attempts before that event, which it would be improper to detail, as well as some after it, which misgave; and it was not till the 13th day of August, 1779, that he was blessed with a partner of his cares, and a helper of his faith and joy. "It had always been," he says, "Secret Survey," for that date, "a ruling principle with me, not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers." How deeply his mind was impressed with the necessity of religion in one's partner for life, is strikingly shown by a small tract written by him on the eve of his marriage, but from which, the length to which this narrative has run out will not permit an extract to be made. He sought a religious wife, and

God at length heard his prayers. He was married to Agnes Smith, the daughter of a respectable farmer in his neighbourhood, and married, there is every reason to think, "in the Lord."

In the prospect of entering into this new relation, his intended wife and he, five days before entered into an agreement of a very different tenor from those which commonly occupy the sole attention of persons on the eve of marriage; an agreement which refers not to the present world, but to the future. It is in preservation, and the reader would regret its omission. It runs thus:

"As in all our ways we ought to acknowledge God, that he may direct our steps; so, in prospect of our proposed connection, which is of great moment, it is the duty of each of us to implore the divine direction, and beg the heavenly blessing; and, in entering into it, to keep the following things in view:

1. "As we should neither eat nor drink for ourselves, so in our marriage we should eye his glory, and study to live together as heirs of the grace of life.

2. "As there is some difference in our views of some things, instead of suffering this to breed discord and contention between us, let it beget in us a proper concern for the divisions of Reuben, and continual supplication for the peace and prosperity of Zion, that as there is one Lord, so his name may be one in all the earth.

3. "Let us expect troubles and trials while in the world, bear them with patience, and seek to get good out of them.

4. "Let us take it for granted that each of us will find some failing to bear with in the other, and so resolve before hand to behave wisely towards each other; never to be both angry at once, to cover one another's faults, and to forgive one another.

5. "Let us study to esteem, respect, and comfort one another, and so to live in love.

6. "Let it be our joint and earnest request, that the grace of God may be in our hearts, his peace rule there, and his blessing rest on our house.

7. "If blessed with children, let us remember that they are but loans, and may be soon recalled; and when one corrects, the other is not to defend them. Let us

bring them up for God, and much rather wish to see them gracious than great.

8. "Let us remember that it is only the heavenly favor that can make us happy, with little or with much; for should he be provoked to send an evil spirit between us, we would be miserable, whatever we might possess.

9. "Let us depend on the providence of God with greater quiet and confidence than on gathered sums.

10. "Hereby we also engage, that the worship of God is to be kept up daily in our family, even though the husband should be called from home all night.

11. "Moreover, we are never to seek heaven on earth, or expect to find felicity below; and so we must welcome that lot, prosperous or afflicted, which Heaven sees it fit to send.

12. "Let us remember that one of us may be snatched away by death before the other, and leave the survivor drowned in sorrow; but let us study so to walk, that the survivor need not sorrow as they that have no hope.

13. "Let us remember that this is not our rest, because it is polluted, and let us rejoice that there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

14. "In all things let us endeavour to adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, and to have our conversation in heaven, from whence we expect the Saviour to come.

"*Aug.* 13, 1779. (Signed) "JAMES MEIKLE,
"AGNES SMITH."

The second article of this engagement makes it necessary to mention, that Mrs. Meikle was connected with that branch of the Secession which is denominated Antiburgher, while Mr. Meikle himself was in communion with the other, styled Burgher. Though they belonged to different communions, neither appears to have been animated by the intolerant spirit of party. They mutually granted the liberty of conscience which they demanded; and enjoyed that pleasure and delightful harmony in private Christian fellowship, which the members of both societies, if possessed of a little more of ther spirit, might enjoy in church fellowship, notwithstanding the minute and unimportant points in which they differ. In proof of this, it is not unworthy of notice, that Biggar, where Mr. Meikle attended divine worship, lies

some miles beyond Ellfrighill, where the congregation of which Mrs. Meikle was a member assembled; and that he usually conducted his wife in the morning to Ellfrighill, and returned by the same road in the evening to bring her home. It appears also from a paper which has been found in his possession, that he interested himself deeply in procuring assistance for the worthy man under whose ministry she sat, whose circumstances, through the poverty of his congregation, were very much straitened. To these proofs that they not only lived in harmony, but as heirs together of the grace of life, others might be added. It is enough to mention further that it was their custom, besides the prayers of the family, and secret prayer, to join together in prayer by turns after they went to bed, before they composed themselves to sleep;* and that occasionally, when they could find convenience, they devoted a day, or part of a day, to solemn humiliation and prayer.

A paper dated February 3, 1780, and entitled "For a family fast," has been found in Mr. Meikle's hand writing, and subscribed both by him and his wife, which will give some idea of the manner in which these days of private devotion were observed. It is arranged under four heads; confessions, grateful acknowledgements, petitions, and resolutions. They confess before God, that they have not in all things set God before them; that they have found too much pleasure in perishing things; that they have sometimes had unbelieving fears and distrust of divine providence; that they have felt an inclination at times to prescribe to God with respect to what he should give or withhold; that they do not improve time and the quiet which they enjoy as they ought; that they are not so deeply affected with the sins of others, nor with the afflictions and divisions of Zion as they should; and that they have not a due sense of gratitude for the many comforts of their lot. They express their gratitude to God for the appearance of religion in their family; for the peace and harmony enjoyed in their house; for the bounty of providence in supplying their wants; for the good crop which they had last season; for their continued health, while many around them were afflicted; and be-

* See Monthly Memorial, Oct. 8, 1781.

cause their dependance was on the providence of heaven, and not on creature security. Their petitions are, that religion may flourish, and professors see eye to eye in the truth; that grace may be bestowed on themselves, and on all their friends; that if children are given them, they may belong to the election of grace, and early know God; that the blessing of the womb and the breasts may come together; that both may be enabled to instruct and correct children, if given them, as becometh christian parents; and the like. And their resolutions are, not to build their happiness on the creature; to submit without murmuring to death when sent into their family; to keep their hearts for God, and not to give them to any other; to approve of Providence, should he be pleased to bereave them of their all, seeing they had their treasure in heaven; to keep up the worship of God in their house, and, finally, to look out for death, and improve for eternity.

Some months after, Mr. Meikle discovers the gratitude of his heart for the happiness he enjoyed in the marriage relation, and the tender solicitude of an affectionate and pious husband, by expressing himself in this manner: "May 30, 1780. I wish to implore divine mercy in these things. 1. That as God has been pleased to set me, who was once solitary, in a family, and bestowed on me one that fears his name, he would be pleased, to spare her, and increase her graces. 2. As it has pleased Heaven that she is with child, and near her time, that the child may be God's in life or in death. O that its soul may live before God! 3. That she may have a happy delivery, and that I may bless God for a living mother and a living child. 4. That if the child be spared, it may be early brought home to God. 5. I acknowledge that I leaned on thy providence for providing me a help-mate, and I have not had cause to complain of my divine support and guide. O to act faith always on him!"

This happiness did not long continue. Mrs. Meikle, some months after the birth of her first child, fell into bad health. Hopes and fears appear for a long period to have had the ascendency alternately in his mind; and her recovery, uniformly for more than twelve months, forms one of the petitions recorded in his private papers. On the 17th of May, 1781, they united together in supplica-

tions to God for the restoration of her health, and express themselves thus: "On account of the long distress in our family, we desire to humble ourselves before God, and to justify the heavenly conduct; for we have sinned, and have had our hearts too little on our native country, too little on heavenly things. While we accept of chastisement from our heavenly Father, we desire to turn to him that smites us; and we humbly plead. 1. For patience till he remove his rod from us. 2. For the sanctified use of this affliction. 3. That he would be pleased to restore to such a measure of health, that we may be enabled to attend on sacramental solemnities in the ensuing summer, and find his presence there. 4. That he would direct us to right means for recovery, and bless the means used. 5. That we may not rely too much on the means used, but look to him alone. 6. That he may bless our child, and hold his hand about her. 7. That he may give us his special presence in the time of our affliction, and make all tend to his glory and our good.

(Signed) "J. MEIKLE,
"AGNES MEIKLE."

The affliction, however, continued and increased during the ensuing summer. His prayers and tears could not avert the stroke with which Providence designed to chasten him. She languished till she brought forth a second child, which was still-born, and survived this event only three weeks. On the 11th of October, 1781, he was left a widower, mourning the loss of an amiable partner, yet not mourning as one of those who have no hope of their own happiness, or of the happiness of those who have been snatched from their embraces.

His exercise on this mournful occasion may be learned by perusing the Monthly Memorial, and Secret Survey, under the proper date. In addition to what is to be found there, it appears from some other private papers, that he revered the providence of God in the dispensation, submitted to it as the correction of a father, and amidst his grief rejoiced in the persuasion of the happiness of her whose loss he bewailed. On the 22d of October he writes thus: "This day my dear-wife and I intended a private fast;* but now she is removed by death, and I

* For some days after her delivery she was apparently recovering.

am left alone to mourn the loss of a religious companion. O to take God in place of all! O comfort me against grief on every side! I wish not to have a stupid insensibility of such a loss; I wish also not to rise up in rebellion against the conduct of Heaven, who is sovereign of all. I desire to lie low in the dust, and to go softly, because thou hast done it." And on the 25th he expresses himself in this manner: "This day in my solitude, and after the loss of a dear wife, a religious companion, I desire to take God for my God, and the God of my child; and I make a cheerful surrender of myself and my child to God. I roll her over on his divine protection; and though I too were to be called out of the world, I can commit her to him, the best of parents and the best of guardians, who is a father of the fatherless. I wish to live only for his glory, and to his praise." The same day among the mercies which he acknowledges to the praise of God, he enumerates the following: "That my dearest friend is gone to glory; that my child is in good health; that God, though he has afflicted, has not cast me off; that there is a fulness of grace and consolation in God for me;—that God has been pleased to connect me with a dear saint, and to bless us with the greatest peace and harmony in our married life, though he has seen fit to make it very short: but the thought is sweet that she is gone to glory."

Mrs. Meikle's character may be described in her husband's words, proposed to be engraved on her monument:

"How sweet she shone in social life,
As daughter, sister, friend, and wife!
The closet, field, and shady grove,
Attest her pray'rs, her vows, her love.
Now done with all below the sun,
She shines before the highest throne.
Her race was swift, her rest is sweet,
Her views divine, her bliss complete;
Her song's sublime, her transports swell,
Her state eternal, God her all:
This, this alone, her husband cheers,
And joy wipes off the briny tears."

Here, however, though with reluctance, the writer of this must stop. The unexpected length to which this narrative has run out, obliges him to forbear entering into any details of the remaining eighteen years of Mr. Meikle's life, and to break off his account at the very period when his personal acquaintance with him began. Materials still remain for exhibiting his character and exercise in various points of view. If what has been written should meet with acceptance, and promise to be useful, he may be induced to enlarge his account, and carry it down to the close of Mr. Meikle's life; if not, more than enough has been already said.

He cannot close his account of him, however, without mentioning, in a word, that he was married again, in the month of November, 1785, to the worthy woman who yet survives to mourn his loss; that in July, 1789, he was ordained to the eldership in the congregation of Biggar; that in the course of the year 1797, having overcome the reluctance to appear professedly as an author, which had prevented the publication of those pieces which he had formerly intended for the press, he printed his "Metaphysical Maxims;" and that on the 7th of December, 1799, he was removed from this world to a better, leaving behind him a name which is better than precious ointment, and a widow and five children, with little on which to depend for future support but the good providence of that God, who, to use his own words, "had guided him through all his wandering, and supplied him during life to his heart's content."

The cheerfulness of his disposition continued to the last. Disappointments never soured his temper. Though strict both in his principles and morals, he never appeared sullen or morose; he was rather cheerful, jocular, and merry. There does not appear, for forty years, among all his voluminous papers, notwithstanding the many severe censures which he passes in them upon himself, one expression from which it can be certainly concluded, that he entertained any doubt of his interest in the divine favour. This, and the constitutional gaiety of his temper, will account for the surprise which many of his most intimate acquaintances have expressed at the perusal of his writings, and explain what otherwise might be deemed paradoxical, that a man uniformly cheerful in compa-

ny, should in private, make death and the future world the favourite subjects of his meditations. To him death was surrounded with no terrors! the future world captivated his imagination, and filled him, as frequently as he contemplated it, with most exquisite joy. He maintained his reputation for piety, and his unshaken faith in God, to the end; and the God whom he served, honoured him with continued usefulness in his station, almost to his last hour. On the first of December, he officiated at Lanark as an elder in the dispensation of the Lord's supper; on the second, he wrote a short article in the Monthly Memorial; on the sixth, he was still serving medicines to his patients; on the seventh he was with God.

J. P.

Edinburgh, June 12, 1805.

THE

TRAVELLER.

MEDITATION I.

Going abroad.

1757.

WHAT a load of business presses me on every hand when about to leave my native country! I must state and clear with all my creditors and debtors before I go! Besides, when I am about my ordinary business, a little pocket-money will defray my charges; but it is not so when *going abroad;* I must have bills of exchange for a considerable sum, and changes of apparel agreeable to that part of the world to which I am bound.

Now, if I am thus busied, thus anxious and concerned about my going from one part to another of this terrestrial globe, with what justice will all this care, anxiety, and concern, be increased, when I must commence my journey to eternity, and set out for the other? This is an event that unavoidably awaits me; and who can tell how soon? Of what folly would I prove myself possessed, should I propose to go so far without a farthing? But with much greater madness would I be intoxicated, should I launch into eternity without an interest in the heavenly treasure. To be poor in any part of this world, begets contempt among the men of the world; but poverty in the world of spirits, is an eternal shame, and an irretrievable loss.

Again, would I not blush to go with tattered cloaths and coloured shoes, to a part of the world where it is fashionable to be finely dressed? How, then, shall I appear without the white raiment of a Saviour's righteousness, in the presence of God, where angels walk in robes of in-

nocence, and saints in broidered garments? When the marriage of the Lamb shall be come, and his wife shall have made herself ready, if found without the wedding-garment, with what confusion of face shall I be covered, and with what anguish cast into outer darkness!

How I am hurried at the last in setting out, notwithstanding I have been so long proposing, and so long preparing for this voyage! Yea, an express arrives, that the ship is ready to sail, and I am taken, as it were, unawares, though for some time I have been expecting such a message. Then, since I have this momentous, this interresting voyage into the world of spirits before me, let my daily study be so to set all my grand concerns in order, that when *death* the *transport* comes, I may have nothing to do but set my foot aboard, and be wafted over to the land of rest. Again, though looking for death daily, yet I, and all my friends, may be surprised at last.

Now of friends and acquaintances I take a long farewell; but at death I bid the whole world an eternal adieu.

MEDITATION II.

On taking farewell.

1757.

Every thing beneath the sun has vanity and vexation engraven on it; and it is fit it should be so, lest men, possessing what they aspire after, should forget themselves. So we see, we feel, that pleasure is interwoven with pain, sweet with sour, joy with sorrow, riches with anxiety and cares, greatness with torment, health with disease, and life with death.

When I took farewell of my friends to see other nations, and rise into a more universal knowledge of the world and men (trifles that please an aspiring mind) yet how were all my fine prospects more than balanced to think, that I might never see my native land again, the land of liberty and light, the *Hephsibah of God!* What if I should drop into the unfathomed deeps of the ocean, and be a prey to the finny tribe? But, abstracting from these gloomy forethoughts, how was joy turned into a flow

of friendly sorrow! Can I yet forget the affectionate *grasp* of hand, the melting *tear*, the parting *kiss*, and kindly *look*, as if it might have been the last, * and all friends so near and dear? Yet this must be: I must either forbear going abroad, or take farewell of all my friends; and who knows if ever I shall see them again, till in another world, where the nearest ties are loosed, and the dearest relation dissolved, unless a spiritual relation unite our souls to him, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, a family that shall never scatter or be dispersed through the ages of eternity! The highest wisdom of the traveller, then, is to get himself made a member of the heavenly family. Thus, when the frail family, of which he is a mortal member, must be divided, parted, and spread abroad, some in death, some in distant lands, he shall never be cast out of the celestial family, nor denied the high privileges thereof, but may cry to God, Abba, Father, and shall find him not far off, when roaring oceans interrupt the father's passionate care, and bound the tender mother's melting flow of affection. Without such a relation we are orphans, though we had the best of fathers, and the kindest of mothers; we are friendless, though we had the most sympathizing sisters, and obliging brothers; destitute, amidst our numerous, rich, and munificent relations; and more desolate than the pelican of the wilderness, or the midnight owl, though crowded with visitants, and among a world of acquaintances. But, blessed with it, no tongue can tell our happiness. Our heavenly Father, knows our need, is ever at our hand; his power and promptitude to do us good exceed the father, excell the kindly mother; his mercy outshines the sympathizing sisters, and his bounty the obliging brother; his promises are better than all our relations, his providence than our richest friends; and his presence than a world of acquaintance, or the levee of kings. In such a situation, the deserts of Arabia shall please, like the places where we were born and brought up. May this, then, be my case, and I am happy in my peregrinations, and joyful in my journeys.

* The Author never saw some friends, alluded to above, again in life, particularly his mother.

MEDITATION III.

The temper of him that goes abroad.

Now I leave my native land in peace with all, and wish well to friends and foes, as no doubt I have both.

Gratitude binds me not to forget my friends; grace, to forgive my foes. He carries but a poor principle in his breast, that goes away swoln with rage, in hopes to return and revenge; for "anger rests only in the bosom of fools." It is a Christian grace to forgive even the worst of injuries; for it ennobles a man more to conquer the wicked principle of his corrupt nature than to take a city. Would I revenge a personal quarrel on any at the day of judgment? Surely no. Shall I, then, carry rancour to the very grave, or lie down in a condition in which I would not wish to rise? Therefore my passion shall be converted into pity, and I will not only forgive men what they may have done amiss to me, but implore forgiveness for them in that wherein they may have offended God. Thus shall I go lightly, compared with the mental madman who cherishes revenge. He continually carries about with him a load of hurtful two-edged weapons, in hopes to find his foe, and satiate his revenge upon him; but, while he waits his opportunity, he slips a foot, and falls among the pointed weapons, which wound him unto death. So must every malicious person fare at last, who falls over the precipice of time into eternity, full of envy, and inflamed with wrath.

MEDITATION IV.

On finding many passengers on shore.

Leith, March, 1758.

Before I came from home, I knew not of a single person but myself that was to set out from the same port to the same place; but, on my arrival here, I find a great many from every corner of the land, waiting a fair wind

to forward them in their intended passage. And may not this call to my mind, that, though only now and then, one here, and another there, departs this life, yet on the confines of endless ages, on the borders of the invisible world, what numbers of departing souls are daily passing from every part of the inhabited globe, to appear before the tremendous bar!

If we glance the mortality bills of well peopled cities, the numbers that daily die are astonishing. And though nothing be more common than death, yet nothing is more affecting than dissolution.

I have taken one step, which may remind me of another that shall overtake me, and that, being my last translation, shall never be succeeded by a future. Let not, then, my improvidence in spiritual things, cause me to repent, when repentance, though perpetuated, may be too late.

MEDITATION V.

On arriving at a strange city.

London.

THOUSANDS and ten thousands are the inhabitants of this place, and yet few or none of them do I know. How soon is man a stranger among his fellow-creatures! He may be acquainted with the people where he was born and brought up, or where he dwelt; but a few days journey convinces him, even among the multitude of men, that he is a stranger on this earth; for where he is acquainted with one, he is unacquainted with ten thousands. This admonishes me to account the world a strange country, and myself as only passing through it to my native country, and therefore to fix my affections on the things that are above, whither I am hastening.

My next reflection leads me to admire thine omniscence with astonishment. Not a person among these many thousands but thou knowest their business, their actions, and their way of life, yea more, their words and very thoughts. Thou also rulest and governest them in all their various actions, numbers of whom have never known thee.

Nor does the conduct of thy providence only extend to this circle of men, but to every individual through the extensive universe. O wisdom to be adored! O power to be depended on! And shall not I, who am but one, trust in thee who orderest all the world so well! Not only the peaceful village in its ordinary round of human life, but the hostile plain in all the tumult and confusion of war, confesses thy sceptre. Then, if all have an interest in thy common providence, shall not I have an interest in thy special care?

My next reflection is on the almost incredible numbers of my fellow-creatures who inhabit here; and if I throw my thought through the world, what greater numbers, what nations are held in life! what then must the general assembly at the great assize be, if, according to some, every thirty or forty years sweeps the world of all its inhabitants? By the same great God, who now governs with wisdom, shall all this mighty assembly be judged with equity, who will render to every one acccording to his works. While thousands hang their head for shame, may I be among those who shall lift up their face with joy before the great congregation.

MEDITATION VI.

Good and bad men mixed together in the world.

London, April 16, 1758.

Now the world of mankind is a mingled multitude; good and bad are mixed together; wheat and tares grow in one field; yea, they dwell now in one house, of whom at the last day one shall be taken and the other left. This is a grievance which cannot be avoided, for we must have connexion with the wicked in the affairs of life, else we must go out of the world. But to some persons, as to me at present, there are certain stages of life, in which they are as it were, chained with the wicked, and handcuffed with the sons of vice, to whom the things of God are foolishness, and by whom the concerns of the immortal soul are never taken into consideration. They live as if they

were to live for ever in this present state, or as if when they die they should never see a resurrection.

What comfort, then, should it be to my soul, that He who once made all things, will again make all things new! He will, as in the old creation, divide, not only between night and day, but between the sons of night, and the children of the day. And while those are covered with shame and confusion of face, and cast into the blackness of darkness for ever, the righteous shall shine as the stars, and as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then shall the people speak a pure language, and to the people of a pure language will the Lord turn, in all the brightest manifestations of his glory. Perverse thoughts within, and profane talk without, shall no more disquiet. Neither wicked company nor wandering cogitations shall vex the child of God any more in the house of God. Then they that walk with him in white, shall talk with one another on the sublimest subjects of eternity, on the love and sufferings of the Son of God. Idle words in that state of perfection shall cease, where every speech is pure and spotless, every whisper celestial, every word divine, and all is one ravishing encomium on redeeming love!

MEDITATION VII.

On being enabled to resist a temptation.

London, April 17, 1758.

Grace to help in time of need is the gift of God to the child of grace, and the greatest blessing we can receive from heaven in a state exposed to temptations from every quarter.

All within me desires to bless thy holy name, that when the temptation was near, thou wast not far off; and that, as it was consistent with thy divine wisdom to permit me to be tempted to sin, it was also consistent with thy grace and goodness to strengthen and deliver me when I was tempted. As my finite wisdom cannot prevent, by timeous foresight, my being overtaken with temptations,

so my feeble powers cannot resist when overtaken. I have thy providence, therefore, to magnify, that I am not overtaken with more temptations than I am; and thy grace to adore, that I am not overcome with every temptation that I am overtaken with.

Human nature (and in me more so than in many) is like a pile of dry and prepared wood for fuel, and temptation is like a spark of fire cast into it; then it must be power divine that hinders all from going into a blaze. O kind compassion! O tender mercy! O glorious good will! I am nothing; hence I shall think humbly of myself, but highly of thy grace.

What a thorny path is human life! How is it strewed with snares, gins, and traps, for head and feet, for heart and hands. If I lift up my head in pride, I fall into the condemnation of the devil. If I look not well to my goings, I am cast into a net by my own feet, and walk upon a snare. Vanity is ready to fill my heart, and wickedness my hands. Not an organ of my body, but satan has his battery played against it; for my ear, the instruction that causeth to err; for my sight, the lust of the eye; and for my touch, the handling of the things that perish. He turns desire into covetousness, care into anxiety, fear into despair; would run down hope, miscall faith, and cast the soul loose of both. Seeing then, that I am thus beset with snares on every side, from every hand, O that on my soul, my one precious stone, there may be *seven eyes*, and a protection round about me better than horses and chariots of fire.

Two lessons I am taught, which, through grace, I never shall forget: 1. To be diffident of myself; 2. To be confident in God, strong in his grace, and to boast in him all the day long. Let the sanctity of my after life, shew the sincerity of my gratitude. And may I mind with joy, that thy name, as to my sweet experience I have found, is a "present help in time of trouble."

MEDITATION VIII.

The Promises a Divine Treasure.

London, April 19, 1758.

Once, with the unthinking world, I esteemed the poor miserable, and called, if not the proud, yet the rich happy; but now, since I glanced the volumes of revelation, I am of another mind. If we compare poor and rich in scripture account, we easily see a mighty odds; for while a threatening is dropt here and there against the one, to the other pertain the precious promises. "Woe to you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." "Go, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." Thus riches, though not a curse in themselves, yet, to depraved and corrupt nature, yield so many opportunities, set so many baits to sin, that it is a sacred and friendly admonition. "Labour not to be rich." Were we only to inspect the lives and deaths of the righteous, it might make us welcome poverty that defends us, by depriving us of so many opportunities to destroy ourselves; but when we see the surprising expressions of paternal care that Heaven has replenished the oracles of truth with, we can do no less than account the poor the happy ones; for such is the mercy of God, that when a man is in misery, then he becomes the object of his mercy.

Now, to show that the promises of God are not bare expressions of good will, let his providential conduct be surveyed, as recorded in the word of truth, and that in a few instances.

Hagar, an Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, flees from the face of her unfriendly mistress; flees to whom she knows not, whither she cannot tell. She sits down by a well of water in the wilderness, no doubt overcome with sorrow. But then the angel of the Lord accosts her; tells her that the Lord had heard her affliction; speaks comfort to her, and makes her a promise, under a grateful sense of all which she calls the name of the Lord, that thus presented her with unexpected kindness, "Thou, God, seest me."—Again, the same Hager is plunged into a

new scene of distress. Her care and confusion are augmented, as she is not now alone in her perplexity, but has her son, her only son with her, the object of her fondest affection, and the hope of her infirm old age. The bottle is spent, and the stripling, for thirst, the worst of all deaths, must die. Her melting bowels being unable to behold the agony of his last moments, she lays him down under a shrub, to screen him from the sultry heat, and goes away from him. Yet maternal care will not let her go too far away; so she sits down over against him, and fixes her eyes on the melancholy spot. And now her grief cannot be contained, as before, in agitating thoughts, but bursts out in briny tears: She lifts up her voice aloud, and weeps. Well, the God that saw her before, sees her still. The voice of the lad, who no doubt mingled his tears and complaints with his mother's is heard; and Hagar's eyes are opened to see a fountain, at which she fills the bottle, gives him drink, and he revives again.

It may not be amiss to name a few more instances of providential care; as, Lot's rescue by Abraham, when he and all he had were taken captive; and afterwards his miraculous deliverance out of Sodom:—Jacob's preservation from angry Laban, when pursued and overtaken by him; and his still more amazing deliverance from Esau's rooted revenge, which is converted into congratulations, tears, and embraces:—The astonishing history of Joseph, through all its unparalleled scenes: The deliverance of the children of Israel, when their bondage was grown insupportable, leading them through the Red Sea, while their pursuers perished in the waters; feeding them in the wilderness with manna from heaven, and keeping their clothes from waxing old. And how many times, in the book of Judges, even when his people had sinned against him, did he show mercy to them in their extremity of misery? The accounts of Naomi, Ruth, and Hannah, show how the mercy of God takes place in all the circumstances of the afflicted. The memorable passage of the ark of God in the Philistines' land; Jonathan's victory over the Philistines; the death of giant Goliah, who had defied the armies of Israel, by the hand of David, who afterwards has a beautiful chain of deliverances from a persecuting Saul, and in his old age from the rebellion of his

unnatural son; the protection of the seven and thirty worthies, amidst the dangers they were exposed to; Elijah fed by ravens, creatures that live on carrion, and yet they bring bread and flesh to the man of God twice a day! the widow's barrel of meal, and cruise of oil blessed so as not to waste by using; Elijah's forty days journey in the strength of one meal; small armies defeating great hosts; armies supplied with water in a miraculous way; the barren woman made to bear; the dead restored to life again; poison prevented from doing mischief, and food augmented; the three children preserved in the fire, and Daniel in the lion's den; all manner of diseases cured by Christ, and his servants, the prophets and apostles; the lepers cleansed, the blind made to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to sing, and the lame to leap; the deliverance of the disciples on the lake, of Peter, when sinking, and afterwards when kept in prison, a destined sacrifice to cruelty and rage; Paul's escape when watched in Damascus, and when laid fast in the stocks with Silas, in the inner prison; when shipwrecked, and when the viper fastened on his hand:—These are some instances that the promises of God have been made out to his people in their adversities. And let those, on the one hand, who have no changes, and therefore fear not God, know, that they have neither part nor lot in these promises. But on the other hand, let him know that suffers under the greatest load of afflictions, that he has a right to the greatest number of promises; and that whenever he loses another enjoyment, then he has a right to another promise, which makes up that loss with a redundancy of goodness.

Now, let us glance at a few of these many great promises, that in all cases and conditions we may take comfort.

If we are troubled with sin in its *uprisings* in our hearts, and *outbreakings* in our life, to us then the promise speaks, "I will take away the hard and stoney heart: I am he that blotteth out your iniquities as a cloud, and your sins as a thick cloud: he will subdue all our iniquities, and cast our sins into the depths of the sea, so that in the day when Israel's sins shall be sought for, they shall not be found: Sin shall not have dominion over you: I will heal their backslidings; I will love them

freely."—Again, with respect to temptation, hear the promise, "He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way to escape." Moreover, this promise is made by him, who being once tempted himself, knows how to succour them that are tempted. Also, if we fear lest we fall into sin, or be overcome when we are buffeted, hear what he says, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness: The just shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger: The righteous shall be like the palm tree in Lebanon, always flourishing and bringing forth fruit, even in old age, when others fade."—If suddenly attacked by the tongue of reproach, or accused at the bar of iniquity, he promises, that in that hour it shall be given how and what to speak, and therefore we should take no anxious forethoughts in the matter.

With his saints in all their afflictions, he is afflicted, and his gracious promises measure breadth and length to all the trouble and distress that can befal them—If poor in spirit, those he cheers, and contemns not his prisoners. A bruised reed he will not break, nor quench the smoking flax; but deals very compassionately with young converts, carries the lambs in his bosom, and gently leads them that are with young: He commands Peter to manifest his love to him by feeding his sheep, his lambs: And says to those in the pangs of the new birth, "Shall I cause to come to the birth, and not give strength to bring forth?"—Again, if they are poor as to this world, he not only makes promises, to them himself, but importunes others to do them good offices; and that he may prevail with them, promises to them, that he that considers the case of the poor, shall not lie on a bed of languishing unconsidering, but have his bed made by God in his sickness. O poor man! he puts thee and himself on one side, by promising to repay, as lent to him, what is given to thee. Every where in the scripture he instructs us to feed the hungry, refresh the weary, clothe the naked, receive the outcasts: "Let mine outcast dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them:" To entertain the stranger and the traveller kindly, to do justice to the oppressed, to help the widow, and judge the cause of the fatherless.—To the afflicted he promises deliverance in the day of

trouble: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee: I will be with thee in trouble to deliver thee: I will never fail thee nor forsake thee, till I have performed the promised good." If exposed to calumny, says the promise, "Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue:" or if reproached, "He shall bring forth thy judgment as the noon-day."

Now, though the promises suit the saints in their various stations, yet, as the afflicted and needy ones have a double share of trouble and sorrow, so they have a double portion of the promises. If they are exposed to storms and drought, he promises to be an hiding-place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and as refreshful rivers in a parched place. If they are reckoned as the refuse of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, he counterbalances this, by promising them that he will honour them, set them on high, and confess their names before his Father, and his holy angels. But they may be in doubt how or where to walk, and how to act; then, says he, "I will lead the blind by a way they know not; I will make crooked places straight, and rough places plain: these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." And when they are so nonplussed as not to know what hand to turn to in their doubts and distress, he says, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Hence says the psalmist, and all saints may say it after him "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel while I live."

But death may invade their family, and lessen the number of their relations. Then says he, "I am the resurrection and the life; and the hour is coming, when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth:" Therefore, sorrow not for your dead as they that have no hope; for they are blessed that die in the Lord, and it is better to be gone, and be with Jesus, than remain here.

If they are subject to bodily infirmity, and bowed down by disease; then says he, "I am the Lord that healeth thee;" and he often shews himself merciful to such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound with cords of affliction, and sends his word and healeth them. But the disease may be spiritual, and so of a more piercing and pungent nature; yet says he, "I will restore

health to his mourners:" He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds; and gives the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.—If their grief be on account of the decay of religion, or the afflicted state of Zion, these promises may yield them comfort, "That Israel shall revive as the corn, grow as the lily, and cast forth her roots as Lebanon; that Christ's name shall endure for ever, and a seed shall serve him to all generations; and that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his church, since he is both the foundation and chief corner-stone, and will be with her to the end." But if their sorrow be about the fewness of them that seem to be saved, or that follow Christ, then the word of comfort is, "The election shall obtain, whoever be blinded," so that a great multitude of all nations, tongues, and languages, shall compose the general assembly and church of the first-born.—If they are under gloomy shadows by divine hidings, yet then hear the promise, "At evening-time it shall be light: Who among you that fear the Lord walks in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God: To you that fear his name shall the Son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and in the light of thy countenance shall they walk on for ever." To which promises the response of faith is, "When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me, for he shall bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." If they are disquieted through trouble of mind, hear the kindly promise, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: Though thou hast been called as a woman forsaken, and grieved in spirit, and as a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God, yet, after the few moments of my displeasure are past, with everlasting kindness will I gather thee: And, as the waters of Noah shall never return to cover the earth, so the covenant of my peace shall never depart from thee; for though thou seem as one altogether afflicted with my waves, tossed with the temptests of my indignation, till thou groan under the anguish of a deserted soul, yet the day is at hand, when I will no more hide my face from you; for though a woman may forget her sucking child, and have no compassion on the fruit of her womb, yet I can never forget thee who art so dear to me."—Again,

to those that are distressed for the divisions of Reuben, the promise speaks, "The watchmen shall see eye to eye, when the Lord bringeth again Zion. There shall be a day when the watchmen in Mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, let us go up to Zion. Judah and Israel shall be one stick in mine hand; for there shall be one Lord over all the earth, and his name one." And the last prayer of the divine sufferer, which runs thus, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us," shall be answered in due time.

To those who are called out to dangers, says the promise, "Thou shalt tread on the lion, and adder; the young lion and dragon shalt thou trample under foot: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee: If ye drink any deadly thing, ye shall not be hurt." Again, if calamities be national, even the time of Jacob's trouble, yet the promise is, "He shall be saved out of it: This man shall be our peace, when the Assyrian cometh into our land, and treadeth in our borders; and, He will ordain peace for us, who makes peace." If enemies rise in war, then the promise is, that they shall be found liars; and though they be numerous, that one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight; for no weapon formed against Zion shall prosper. But if they should be made prisoners, the promise reaches that situation also: "Verily, I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction;" which was made good to Israel, who were pitied by them that led them captive.

Are they blind, dumb, deaf, maimed, deformed, feeble, and perishing? Then the promise is that the Son of God, whose coming from heaven we look for, "shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue even all things unto himself." To the barren he promises to give in his house, and within his walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters. To the stranger he promises to be a shield. But perhaps they are not only strangers for a little time, but outcasts

for a long time; then "the Lord gathereth the outcasts of Israel, and will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back." But they perhaps, have been long expecting the performance of the promise, and praying for some blessing that has not been bestowed; well, but says the promise, "The needy shall not always be forgotten, the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, he will hear their cry, and save them. "But they may be exposed to the cunning plots of designing men; true, say the sacred oracles, "The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth: but the Lord shall laugh at him," in way of derision, to see him so bent to undermine another, whose more terrible doom is at hand, even a day coming that shall pluck him out root and branch, while the righteous shall be an everlasting foundation. But one may be fatherless, and such is ready to suffer injury at every hand: But, says the promise, "God is a Father to the fatherless, and the widow's Judge in his holy habitation:" And so says he, "Leave thy fatherless children."—Ah! Lord, may the dying parent say, I must leave them: Well, but, says God, "I will preserve them alive:" that is, provide for them, and bring them up like a kindly tutor, and what more couldst thou do though still with them? Then, may the sympathizing husband say, And what shall this thy handmaid do? "Let thy widow trust in me," and she shall not be ashamed of her hope; I will be to her as the most tender husband.

Again, the comforting word to such as are living among the ungodly, and chained to bad company, is, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation," as he did Lot in a like situation.—But their work allotted them may be arduous and difficult; then the promise is, "I will be with thy mouth; thou shalt not be afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee; the tongue of the stammerer shall speak plainly, and the heart of the rash shall understand wisdom; I will direct their work in truth: And as his day is, so shall his strength be."—But they may be solitary, their dearest friends, and nearest relations, being removed by death; then, saith the promise, "God setteth the solitary in families, and bringeth out those that are bound with chains."—But they may

be troubled to think how they shall hold on through the wide, the waste, the howling wilderness; how they shall make the steep ascent to the hill of God; then the promise is, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest: Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left: They shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint: He that is feeble among them, at that day shall be as David, and the house of David, shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord."—But they may have their daily difficulties how to support their needy families; well, the promise also speaks to that condition: "They that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing: Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and keep them alive in famine: Bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure: Therefore, I say, take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, neither for the body what ye shall put on; the life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment; consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; can ye be in a worse condition? Nor have they store or barn to lay up what they might spare in the plenty of harvest, yet God feedeth them all the year round. How much better are ye than the fowls of heaven; and think ye that ye shall fare so much worse than they at the hand of your heavenly Father? And as for clothing, consider the lilies how they grow, they neither toil nor spin, yet surpass Solomon in all his glory. If God then so clothe the grass of the field, which so quickly perishes away, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith! Why fearful about these things, when it is your Father's good pleasure, O little flock! to give you the kingdom? Think not anxiously on your own necessities, because your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.—But they may be distressed with daily afflictions, and continued chastisements; well, the promise speaks a good word to dissipate that pain: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."—But perhaps old age advancing, with all its train of infirmities, may trouble them; then the promise proclaims the divine protection: "Even

to your old age I am he, and to your hoar hairs will I carry you. And thou shalt pass into the land of glory in that beautiful maturity, as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season." But they may be under bondage through fear of death, and even tremble to take the dark step into the unseen world; then the promise speaks comfort in the very last extremity: "O death! I will be thy plague; O grave! I will be thy destruction:" So that they may break out into the same raptures, that saints viewing the same change, sweetened by the same promise, have done of old, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? This God is our God, and will be our guide even unto death: Yea, though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

MEDITATION IX.

The Sacred Insurance.

Horndean, April 30, 1758.

Men that go to sea, conscious of their danger, oftentimes insure; that so, though their ships should be wrecked, their value may be secured to them. I am also going to sea, and carry a cargo with me more precious than all the treasures of the Indies, even mine immortal soul, which is also in danger of perishing upon the waters of *vice* and *profanity*. How then shall my *all* be safe amidst so many dangers; amidst the corruption of nature and the seeds of sin within, and bad example, base advice, bold attacks, and baneful snares without, while perhaps there is not one to counsel me aright, to strengthen my hand in God, and thereby comfort me? Blessed be the God of all consolation, that in this deplorable situation I need not despond. The *insurance-office* of heaven is willing to contract with me on the most honourable, and most advantageous terms for my soul; and holds forth to me the stedfast promise of his faithfulness, "That his

grace shall be sufficient for me, because his strength is made perfect in weakness, and that he will not suffer me to be tempted above measure, but will with the temptation make a way to escape."

Then, Lord, my humble request is, That I may never sin against thy love and grace, nor cause thee to hide thy countenance by my untender walk:—That sin may continue, whatever shape it may put on, as ugly and abominable to me as ever I thought it, yea, the more so the more I am entangled with it; as I would more lothe the serpent twisting round my legs, than crawling ten yards distant from me on the ground:—That I may ever be grieved with the sins of others, and that, in appearing against sin, I may not fear the face of man:—That the more all things would draw me from thee, I may draw the nearer to thee, and keep the closer by thee:—That I may never be ashamed of religion, or of thee:—That I may remember the concerns of thy glory as far as in me lies, and pray for the reviving of religion, and prosperity of Zion:—That I may study, since I cannot have the ordinances of God in public, to enjoy the God of ordinances in private:—That I may never be cast down for temporal misfortunes, but own the hand of God in all; and, like the honey-bee, suck sweetness to my soul, from that same providence which affords rancour and disquiet to the unsubmissive mind:—That in the midst of all, I may bear my latter end in my mind, and never forget the world to come:—That I may depend on nothing in myself, but be always strong in the grace and strength that is in Christ Jesus:—That every Sabbath may be sweet to my soul, in spite of all obstruction; and that an opportunity may be afforded to me, to read that word which I should esteem more than my necessary food. O grant me my request! for, as of old, thou didst suffer none to do thy chosen ones harm, yea, for the sake of thy prophets didst reprove mighty kings, so now, if I be among the number of thy people, thou canst, who hast the hearts of all men in thy hand, not only restrain, but reprove the bold offender, and keep me safe in the midst of danger; and, as a sign of my gratitude for thy great goodness, not a little, but all I am, have, or can do, shall, all my lifetime, be devoted to the advancement of thy glory, and honour of thy name.

MEDITATION X.

On Pumping the Ship.

Spithead, May 11, 1758.

No ship can be so well caulked, but she will draw water, more or less, though where or how we scarce can tell; and though it is only by the assistance of the watery element we sail from shore to shore, yet, if too much water were let in on us, it would sink us to the bottom of the mountains, and bury us amidst unfathomable waves: Even so, though a moderate portion of the good things of this life be highly useful to us through the various stages thereof, yet, when the cares of this life, carnal pleasures, and a desire after riches, break in on our souls like mighty billows, we bid fair to be drowned in destruction and perdition. Again, on such an ocean of waters, and when water also swells within us, what a wonder that we are not lost! So, in such a world of wickedness (witness the wretches around me) and when corruption so swells within, what a miracle of mercy that the soul is not lost for ever!

Whatever way the water comes into the ship, it cannot be sent out the same way, but must be pumped out with care and toil; even so, though death and sin came in by mere man, yet life and salvation must be brought in by him who is both God and man in one. And as this bilge-water comes not from a lave of the surging waves, or breaking billows, but as it were, springs up within the vessel, and thus is both dangerous and disagreeable; just so, though we keep from scandalous outbreakings, yet if we indulge ourselves in secret sin, we both defile and destroy the inner man. The faster the ship makes water, the more we ply the pump; so the more that sin attacks, and is likely to prevail, the more I am to watch and pray against it; and prayer is the Christian's chain pump, which must be employed, else the soul would perish. Lastly, as the mariner must pump again and again, and never think his labour at an end, while his ship is at sea, so I must watch against sin, keep myself from mine iniquity, attend well to the state of my soul, and implore

the inhabitation of the Divine Spirit, till my vessel arrive at the harbour of eternal rest.

MEDITATION XI.

On the Anchors of the Ship.

Spithead, May 4, 1758.

Men unacquainted with navigation, would think that the cables to which the anchors are appended were fastened to some part above deck; but it is not so; they come from the very inmost part of the ship, and are as it were its bowels winding out. Even so, faith, which is the anchor of the soul, is no external form, or superficial act, but the very soul, in all her faculties, going out and fastening on Christ.

And, as it is enough to the ship that she rides safe at her moorings, though her anchors are not exposed to every eye, but hid beneath an heap of waters, and only known by their effects, that she keeps by her station, in spite of winds and waves, of tides and storms: just so, it is enough that the anchor of the soul be fixed within the vail, though concealed from vulgar view; it will be known by its sweet effects. The soul shall abound in fruits of righteousness, shall find a sweet tranquillity within, shall be stable like Mount Zion, while the wicked shall be tossed like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

Sometimes a ship may drive, when neither the anchor is weighed, nor the cable cut or slipt; but then it is owing to the anchor losing its hold; but this is remedied by letting out cable, or dropping the anchor anew: Just so, when the soul loses its hold of Christ and heavenly things, it is no wonder that it be driven hither and thither, by storms and tempests, among rocks and quick-sands; nor is there any other way of bringing the soul to rest and composure, but by acting faith more strongly on Christ, and casting her anchor anew within the vail.

It would be ridiculous for the shipmaster to hoist his sails before he weigh his anchors; but the Christian can

never steer safely through the course of life, but with his anchor fixed within the vail; then, if he is thus heavenly wise, he shall weather every storm, and make the haven, the long wished for haven, at last.

Even the ship at anchor is never altogether free from motion in the greatest calm, and, at sometimes will roll in such a manner as to make some of the ship's company sick, and others believe that the anchor has lost his hold, and that all is in danger: Even so, the saints, though secured against utter ruin, may have many changes, may be much tossed with adversities, and various afflictions, and may have fears without and fightings within.

But, how much wiser is the mariner in a storm, than the children of wisdom themselves! The fiercer the tempest, and the greater the danger, they cast out the more anchors. But the saints, in times of greatest trouble, instead of acting the strongest faith, are apt to cry out, 'Lost, and undone!' and so cut their cables, and cast loose their anchors; and thus, and that always in a night of sorrow and anguish, are tossed on the rough sea of despondency and doubt, for a time. Faith, however, has this advantage above all the cables ever made, and all the anchors ever fabricated, that it secures in spite of fiercest storms, and keeps safe in the midst of imminent dangers, relying *more* or *less* on him who cannot fail, even when providence contradicts the promise.

Now, as no ship goes to sea without her cables and anchors, though of no use till she come again near the land; so I should do every thing in faith; for without faith it is impossible to please God, or come to an anchor in the harbor of glory.

MEDITATION XII.

The Sails.

Spithead, May 5, 1758.

Anchors are servants to us in the harbor, but are entirely useless at sea, where another kind of tackling is ab-

solutely necessary, to wit, the expansive sails that spread their friendly wings, and catch the favoring gales, to forward us in our intended voyage.

Even so, the spiritual seamen must to their anchors of faith, add virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: These are the sails that bid fair for a prosperous voyage, and bring us daily nearer to the celestial land.

The Holy Spirit breathing on the public ordinances, and the more private duties of Christianity, is like a fair wind, and a brisk gale on a full spread sail, which answers the highest expectation of the homeward bound ship. No shipmaster could ever expect, under his bare poles, to make the desired haven, though favored with a very fresh gale. If he did not both unfurl and stretch his sails in the best direction for the wind, he would look more like a madman than a mariner. So he that attends on no ordinances, attempts the performance of no duty, reads not the scriptures of truth, and prays not to the God of all grace, is not in the way of the heavenly gale that wafts the saints to glory.

Again, the sails, fore and aft, may all be unfurled, by a skilful hand, and spread out to the wind, and yet the ship for a time make little way, because scarcely favoured with a breath of wind. So the influences of the Spirit may be restrained for a time, and the saints, even in the use of every mean, may make but little progress in their Christian course. But as the experienced seamen, in such a case, crowds on all his sails, adds a top-gallant sail, and appends studding sails; so we, with the spouse, should rouse up ourselves, rise from our sloth, ask anxiously after him, be earnest and importunate in every duty, till we find him whom our soul loveth.

Nothing can be a more pleasant sight at sea than a fleet of ships, richly laden, with a moderate gale, steering a straight course to the port at which they have long been expected, and which they have long desired to see. But a company of saints travelling Zionwards, rich in heavenly graces, and the hopes of eternal glory; and under the influences of the Holy Ghost, steering a straight course to the church of the first-born, where they have

been long expected by the souls under the altar, and which they have long desired to see, is a more noble sight.

Finally, as the ship never takes in her sails till arrived at her desired haven, so we should be always on our guard, keep every grace in vigour, never be weary in well doing, but press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, till we make the haven of bliss, the harbour of glory.

MEDITATION XIII.

On the Compass and Helm.

Spithead, May 6, 1758.

Anchors and sails are both useful; but without something more, the mariner must steer an unsteady course, and traverse the ocean to little purpose, not knowing where he is, nor whither he goes. These handmaids of navigation are, the compass, the quadrant, and the helm. Without the compass, he durst never venture from the coast, because he would sail he knows not whither; without the quadrant, he must mistake his latitude; and without his helm, he might be driven whither he would not. Even so all these in a spiritual sense are absolutely necessary to every one who would have a safe passage to the other world. Therefore, seeing I am on a long, but interesting voyage to eternity, much care should be taken what course I steer, since one point wrong, so to speak, instead of landing me safe in glory, will run me among the rocks of irretrievable ruin. Did not they seem to bid fair for a prosperous voyage, and for making the very harbour, who could boast to Christ himself, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works?" and yet he professes to them that he never knew them.

Now, I must direct the course of my life, and the end of my actions, by the sacred compass of divine revelation. This should be a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path; my counsellor in all difficulties, and my song in the house of my pilgrimage; yea, my daily and delicious food.

Here I must observe, that if the most skilful pilot cannot, without the compass, sail from England to the Indies; so the heathen, for all the blaze of natural parts, for all their refined manners, or excellent morals, yet wanting the word of God, the volume of inspiration, can never reach the shore of happiness; for "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard! and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

Again, like the spiritual mariner, I should take my altitude, and see what length I have run, what progress I have made in my course heavenward. Now, this is known by the height of the Sun of righteousness in my sky. If he enlighten the whole inner man, shine into my heart, irradiate every power of mind, cover me with his healing beams, fill my ravished eye, engage my attention, and excite me daily to adore and bask beneath my Savionr's gracious rays, surely I am well on to the meridian, well on to the land of rest.

Again, I should steer the helm by the compass of divine truth, guard against running out of my latitude, but be attentive to my life according to thy word, and have a zeal according to knowledge. Thus shall I at last under a full sail, in a triumphant manner, have an abundant entrance ministered to me into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION XIV.

Provisions and Stores.

The ship must not only be well supplied with every thing necessary for navigation, but with food for the seamen on their voyage. If they have not laid in both bread and water, they shall soon be in a starving condition, reduced to eat one another, or die, and never see the country for which they set out. Just so, if we do not live on a crucified Jesus, if he be not the food of our souls, and in us the hope of glory: If we cannot make a spiritual meal, a spiritual feast on the promises, we shall be consumed of famine, and perish in our passage.

Again, as this day's allowance will not support us to-

morrow, so it is not by grace received that we must pursue our Christian journey; for we must be strong only in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and daily receive out of his fulness.

Further, the provision which we carry to sea must be prepared in another manner than what is used at land, otherwise it will corrupt, and become altogether useless. Even so, a form of godliness, and counterfeit graces, a cradle-faith, and a family-piety, will not support us in our passage to the world of spirits.

Besides, in a scarcity of provisions, the vermin, rats to wit, will attempt to gnaw the flesh of the poor sailors. Even so, when grace is languid or withheld, what lusts prey on the vitals of the soul! O, then, for a full meal on the bread of life, that I may be safe from sin and satan, earth and hell!

Our provisions, when long at sea, are apt to breed maggots, worms, and insects; yet, if wholesome when put aboard, will support us till we accomplish our voyage. So, it is no wonder though, amidst so many snares, so many temptations, and in such a variety of circumstances and occurrences, the graces necessary to the Christian life, be more or less languid at times, and sometimes appear so much disposed to putrefaction, that spiritual death is dreaded to be at hand; but, if true grace be first implanted, the Christian shall not perish by the way, but have the bread and water of life bestowed upon him, till he come to the banquet above.

Moreover, if a supply of provisions, suitable to the length of the voyage, or of the time designed to be at sea, is neglected, a scarcity will ensue, that will ruin the ship. So, how sad to sail through life, with nothing but vanity and mind to feed on! The soul must starve all his life-long, and die at last of spiritual famine, the most terrible of all deaths. A ship, indeed, short of provisions, may meet another at sea, and obtain a liberal supply; but this is not the case with a graceless soul; no other can help, none can spare of his own stores to supply others.

No private person, yea, nothing less than majesty, could afford so many persons as are in the navy, this ample provision. So, neither from saints nor angels is the poor sinner to expect righteousness or grace; all are beggars or bankrupts themselves, and so can give no ran-

som for their brother's soul. But how rich the King of heaven! that gives both grace and glory to his angels and saints, and yet remains an overflowing ocean of goodness!

In a long voyage, it may be sometimes necessary to put the whole ship's company on short allowance, but death never follows this. So, the saints, in their way heavenward, may find themselves for a time deprived of public ordinances, which should nourish the soul (it is our sin, without urgent causes, to deprive ourselves of them) yea, may find the communications of grace more sparingly bestowed, or, to their sense, for a season withheld; but still grace in the soul, and the soul itself, shall by faith be kept alive, till they land in glory, where they shall feast on the plentitude of all divine goodness.

Again, we must not only have the ship thoroughly equipped, but we must have spare anchors, spare sails, and spare masts; else in a storm, when we may be driven from our anchors, or at sea, when our sails may be blown to pieces, and our masts brought by the board, we must remain at the mercy of wind and wave, and perish in our distress. So, it is proper that every Christian lay up in his mind the promises, the word on which God has caused him to hope; that in the day of darkness and tempest, when like to sink in the mighty waves, he may have recourse to them, as holding forth an unchangeable love, and call to mind his past experience of divine goodness; like the psalmist, "I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." Thus shall he weather out the storm, and have a safe passage to the land of promise.

MEDITATION XV.

Ballast.

Spithead, May 8, 1758.

NOTWITHSTANDING all this nice apparatus, and royal provision made for the vessel designed for foreign climes, there is one thing absolutely necessary for her safety in the main ocean, among roaring winds, and that is a due weight of ballast. To see such a quantity of gravel, sand, stones, pegs of iron, &c. thrown into the ships hold, would

make an ignorant person apt to conclude, that it must sink the ship, and not conduce to her safety; but, if she were not sunk to a proper depth, she would buoy up on the surface of the water, and be overset by every gale that blows. Just so, a pressure of affliction is absolutely necessary for the saint in his passage heavenward. If every thing went prosperously on, spiritual pride might buoy up the soul, and expose her to be overset by every wind of temptation; and such winds the people of God may expect below. Indeed, there are causes, manifold causes of humility cleaving to the best; but, before God suffers his saints to be exalted above measure, even through the manifestation of the divine favour, he will let loose the messenger of satan to buffet them, as he dealt with Paul of old.

As the ship sails more safely thus ballasted, though it has a greater depth of water to cut through; so it is safer for the soul to be kept in a due poise of humility and lowness of mind, than to float on the surface, and catch every gale.

Again, it may be necessary sometimes to shift the ballast fore or aft, as the ship goes more or less upright, to alter her position. Even so, according to our necessity, our afflictions may be removed from one thing, and laid upon another that is dear to us. We may suffer in our estate, or good name; trouble, disease, or death, may be laid on our children, or the wife of our bosom; and we may be afflicted in our bodies, or in our minds, as Infinite Wisdom sees meet; which should silence us under all.

Again, the food that we eat, and the water that we drink, is part of the ballast, and keeps us deep in the water. Just so, our best comforts, at least what we thought best, are often made bitter with some cross. Thus, have not some husbands sharp sorrow from her that lieth in their bosom? Have not some parents much vexation from those whom they have swaddled, and brought up? Therefore, to expect little from the creature, and all from God, is the way never to be disappointed, but always at rest.

Finally, here is the crowning comfort, that, as the ballast is turned out, when the ship goes into dock, so when I arrive at my much desired haven, affliction shall no more have place in me; then shall I obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away.

MEDITATION XVI.

The more we see of sin, the more we should hate sin.

When Israel was in their own land, they were mad on idolatry; but, when forced to sacrifice at Babylon to idols which they knew not, they got such a surfeit of that sin, that they loathed it ever after. How, then, should I henceforth hate sin, when I see how naked it makes the soul, how it debases even unto hell, how the longer the captive lies in chains, the fetters grow stronger, and the captive weaker; how it kindles hell, scatters brimstone over the tabernacle, makes the language of the pit spue from the tongue, and makes restless in the pursuit of sin; in a word, contemns divine things, proclaims rebellion against heaven, and wages war against God!

MEDITATION XVII.

Knowing a sin to be committed.

Spithead, May 15, 1758.

In vain, O foolish man! in vain thou hidest thyself, for "there is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." Hast thou chosen the gloom of night? Well, but night is to God as day, and darkness as the light. Thou didst premeditate the perpetration of thy wickedness, and God is preparing the punishment of thy crimes.

Lord! thy judgments are a great deep, and thy justice shall shine in the punishment of sinners, who shall confess the equity of thy burning indignation. Thus, they who unweariedly blaspheme in pastime and in sport, shall eternally blaspheme in agony and pain. Thus, the unclean wretch, who burns in impure desires, and satisfies his lusts in an unlawful way, shall be delivered to the flames, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. He who will not hearken to God's reproof, in

the time of his long-suffering, shall hear when vengeance shall be his garment, and his fury shall uphold him. Thus, the companions of sin shall be the companions of suffering, being bound in bundles to be burnt together. Thus, the adulterers, who know no shame, shall be ashamed, and covered with confusion in that day. And such as now expose their wickedness to some, with impunity, shall be exposed before the great congregation, and shall not be able to hold up their face before the spotless throne.

Then thou, O sinner! shalt be there, and I shall be there. Here I know thy sin, and, if mercy prevent not now, there I shall see thy punishment. How shalt thou wish this day, this night, out of the number of the days of thy years, and not added to thy months! How wilt thou wish darkness to cover it, and a cloud of oblivion to dwell upon it! How wilt thou curse it, when ready to raise up thine everlasting mourning! When thou wast a child, thou couldst not commit this wickedness, and when thou art a man, thou shouldst not; therefore, how shalt thou curse thy manhood, and bewail thy riper years; yea, wish that thou hadst been an untimely birth, an infant that never saw the sun! Thy sin is marked in my mournful meditation, in thy conscience which is at work secretly, and in the omniscience of thy tremendous Judge. There will be no want of proof against thee in the day of thy cause; the companion of thy wickedness shall be present, I shall be present, conscience shall be present, when thou appearest before thy Judge, who, being every where present, is the greatest witness of all. There will be no casting of witnesses there; for no false witness can appear at that tribunal, yea, thou thyself shalt never presume to plead *not guilty*. As sure as thou hast committed this sin, shall these events take place! And yet, O man! thou art merry in the midst of all thy misery, and observest not the impending thunders that are about to break on thy devoted head. Sin is that poison that makes a man go laughing to death, and dancing to destruction. Then, let my soul weep in secret places for those that cannot pity themselves, nor shew compassion on their own souls, but live in a dream, die in darkness, and plunge into despair.

MEDITATION XVIII.

A Man of War.

May 16, 1758.

THERE is a great difference between a trading ship and a man of war. The one goes out for private gain, and the other for the public good. *That* neither intends to attack, nor is prepared to resist, if attacked in her voyage; but *this* spreads the sails, and sweeps the sea, to find and fight the foe; and, therefore, carries along with her weapons of every kind, and instruments of death.

Even so, the Christian has another course of life to lead than the worldling, even while sojourning in the world. And, as the ship of war must not traffic from port to port, having more noble things in view, life and liberty to defend, and enemies to subdue; so, "no man that wareth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

We are never out of danger, while at sea; for, though it be a time of peace, we may be overtaken with a tempest, wrecked on a rock, or sit down on a sand-bank: But, in these disquieted times, we may be shattered by an engagement, sunk by the foe, or blown up by accident; or, should we escape all these, we may have a mutiny within. Just so, whatever be the situation of the sons of men, still the children of grace have a war to maintain; not only a sea full of storms to struggle through, but a field of foes to fight through. It is through fire and water, through severe trials, and heavy afflictions, that all spiritual champions have to force their way. Satan knows well how to act; when faith would look to the bright side of every event, satan turns up the black side, to drive the soul to despair; and, on the other hand, when grace looks to the blackness of sin, he turns up the beautiful side of pleasure. In adversity, I am ready to dash against the rocks of discontent; and, in prosperity, to fall among the quicksands of worldly cares and temporal concerns. We have foes on every hand to fight,

temptations from every quarter to resist, all the powers of darkness, all the principalities of the pit, to combat with; nor is peace to be expected while an enemy is on the field; neither must we lay aside our armour, the weapons of our warfare, till we lay down the body of death.

Again, though for a time we have no foe to affright us, no tempest to trouble us, no rock to endanger us, yet a mutiny may rise within, than which nothing can be more terrible; and it is always the dregs of the crew that are chiefly concerned in it, while the officers are sure either to be cut off, or confined. Just so, there may be a tumult raised in the soul, a war in the very mind, when rascally corruptions, headed by unbelief, claim the command; when graces, faith, love, patience, resignation, spirituality, &c. are wounded, and put under confinement: Thus, one complained of old, "I see another law in my members, waring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." Now, as no scene can be more melancholy than a mutiny, till it be suppressed, and order restored; so nothing can be more melancholy than a soul suffering all the calamities of a war within, corruption rampant, and grace bleeding.

But, how happy is the ship, when peace is restored, and the mutineers secured in irons, and what a strict eye is kept on them during the voyage! So it is with the soul; what joy, what exultation and triumph, prevail, when sin is subdued, and the love of God, and peace of conscience, are shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost!

This is known, that when the mutineers get the ascendance, and compel the rest of the ship's company to join them, they turn pirates, are resolute in battle, bloody in their conquests, desperate in all attacks, a terror to, and hated of every nation. Even so, he that sets out with a fair profession of religion, and on the way to heaven, but turns a black apostate, spues out malice against the ways of God, becomes the bitterest of all enemies, the most profligate of all offenders, and is hated of saint and sinner.

When a mutiny takes place, it is sometimes requisite for the safety of the ship, and for the honour of govern-

ment, to cut off some otherwise very useful hands. Just so, we are to cut off lusts, though dear as our right eye, or useful as our right hand, that we perish not for ever.

Again, our being provided with what enables us to defend ourselves, and to distress our foes, has sometimes been the ruin of ships, while the fatal spark makes a terrible explosion, tears the vessel to pieces, and scatters the lifeless crew on the deep. So the best of blessings, the choicest privileges, when not improved, entail the bitterest of curses. Thus Judas, who sat in his divine master's presence, heard his sermons, and witnessed his miracles, not improving these golden opportunities, turned traitor and hanged himself, in the anguish of despair. And Capernaum, that in privileges was exalted to heaven, is threatened to be thrust down to hell.

When war is over, peace proclaimed, ships on foreign stations called home, prize-money received, ships paid off, and laid up, and the crews discharged, and set at liberty; how is all mirth and jocundity, festivity and joy! But, what tongue can tell the transports, the joy, the rapture, and delight, which the Christian shall feel when his warfare is finished, and he translated to the mansions of glory, to the presence of God!

Some poor creatures, who, though weary of the war, yet not knowing how to support themselves, or where to go after discharged from the ship, would be content to continue still in the service. And this reminds me of some saints, who, not being free of doubts with respect to their state in a future world, notwithstanding all their toils in life, and struggles against sin, cling to life, and startle at the thoughts of death.

But, there are some provident persons who have saved a little in the course of the war; and some so happy as to get on the half pay list, or obtain a pension from their prince: These cheerfully retire to live on their money, repeat their dangers, recount their conquests, and commend their king. Just so, the souls that are enriched by the King eternal, and blessed with the full assurance of celestial felicity, go triumphant, at the hour of death, to dwell in the courts of God, on the treasures of glory, through an endless evermore.

MEDITATION XIX.

The difference between the righteous and the guilty.

Lying off Normandy, June 14, 1758.

THOUGH with respect to the outward man, there is no difference, as one Creator has fashioned them both alike in the womb; yet, with respect to the inner man, there is an amazing dissimilitude. In the darkest night, there are some rays of light; but, in these sons of vice, there is not the least vestige of holiness. Yea, that modesty, which one would think was inseparable from human nature, they have eradicated by a long practice of sinning. They seem to have stabbed their conscience, bound it hand and foot, and carried it forth to be buried, like a dead corps, in the deep dug grave of oblivion, from whence it shall come forth upon them in a terrible resurrection.

What a wide difference, then, between the shining examples of piety, and the sons of profanity? The affections of the one are refined, and their desires exalted; but the inclinations of the other are corrupt, and their desires grovelling. Sin has but a tottering standing, and a momentary stay in those; but has fixed his throne, and taken up his eternal residence (if grace prevent not) in these. In the one, grace and sin struggle for sovereignty; in the other sin domineers, and there is no disturbance. The one is wise for a world to come, the other minds not that there is a future state. The discourse of the one is always seasoned with salt; of the other, insipid and vain. The one has his hope fixed in God, the other has no fear of God before his eyes. Those use the world without abusing it; but these, in using the world, abuse both themselves and it. The one confesses a God in his daily conversation, and rejoices with his whole heart in him; the other says in his practice, there is and wishes in his heart, there were no God. The one adores the Creator above all, the other worships the creature more than the Creator, though he be God over all, blessed for ever. The one names the name of God, with profoundest reverence, and departs from iniquity; the other profanes it

with impudent loquacity, and adds iniquity to sin. The one redeems common time, and sanctifies that which is sacred; the other trifles away the one, and sins away the other. The one studies his duty in obedience to all, the other shakes himself loose of every law. This forgives his foes, that lays a snare for his friends. The one commits it to God to plead his cause, and avenge his wrong; the other, fiery and tumultuous, threatens duels and death. The one loveth chastity in all things, the other wallows in uncleanness. The one injures himself rather than his neighbour; the other, the whole world rather than himself. The one is content with his condition, the other covets all the day long. The one is all glorious within, the heart of the other is like a cage full of unclean birds. The one walks at liberty in the ways of God, the other is the servant and slave of sin. In this, dwells the spirit of God; in that, rules the god of this world. The one has his conversation in heaven; the other, in hell.

But, as there is a wide difference in their principles and practice, so in their privileges. The one is under the blessing of love, the other under the curse of the law. The one is a child of adoption, the other, the prey of the terrible one. He is faithful that hath promised felicity to the saints, and threatened vengeance to the wicked. The one is allowed with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation, the other shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty. To the one pertain all the exceeding great and precious promises, to the other all the threatenings of God. "The righteous hath hope in his death, but the wicked is driven away in his wickedness." The one shall enter into the joy of his Lord, but the anguish of his enemies shall prey on the other for ever. Heaven shall be the palace of those, hell the prison of these: And, while the one shall dwell through eternity with God, the other shall be driven away into everlasting darkness.

Thus, the righteous and wicked are separated in their life, and divided in their death; divided in their principles and practices, in their choice and joys, in their meditations and privileges, in their company and in their converse, in their fears and in their expectations, in their death, and through eternity itself

Then, how much more excellent than his neighbour is the righteous! and how are the sons of Zion comparable to fine gold! As only among them, of all the human race, I can expect to spend eternity, so only among them, to spend the remainder of my time, in every *tie* and *relation*, is all the happiness of society that I desire below.

MEDITATION XX.

The judgment of swearers, according to equity.

Lying off Normandy, June 15, 1758.

How justly will God, the righteous Judge, measure the purport of their imprecations into the bosoms of these blasphemers! They swear *by God*, and so they own the divinity they offend; but, they profane the sacred name, and so offend the Deity they own. They damn the whole man, their soul, their blood, their eyes; and every part, even the whole man, shall be tormented. They sow the wind, for there is neither pleasure nor profit in any sense in swearing; and they shall reap the whirlwind, whose truth is disappointment, and pain. They sin in sport, but God hears in earnest, and will punish in zeal. They call on God profanely at every word, and God hears, and will answer them in wrath. They swear, and forget, but God has sworn that he will remember. That which they think adds beauty to their speech, and vigour to their words, shall indeed add anguish to their grief, and strength to their torments. They are not weary in blaspheming, so as to cease from it, therefore they shall be weary in bewailing themselves, but never cease. They choose to blaspheme through the whole of their time, and anguish shall cause them to blaspheme through a whole eternity. They despise the day of God's patience, but shall not escape the day of his judgment. What shall the blasphemer say, when tossing on the fiery billows, shrieking under consummate despair. 'O miserable state of intolerable torments, which I must endure! How shall I spend this eternity of pain! It was nothing to me in time to

hear others curse and blaspheme, and to join in the infernal dialect myself; and now I am encircled with unceasing blasphemies, from all the legions of fallen angels, from all the millions of miserable sinners, suffering under infinite vengeance; and I mingle in the uproar, and join in the terrible tumult against the throne of God, although dreadfully tortured in my rebellion. *Then*, curses accented every sentence; *now*, every sentence is one continued curse. I thought God was altogether such an one as myself, and that he would never remember my oaths, which I never minded, nor call me to account for committing what I made no account of. *Damn me, damn me*, was always on my tongue, and I am damned for ever! The oaths and curses which I sowed in time, are now sprung up into bitter bewailings, and eternal blasphemings. As I took pleasure in cursing, so it is come unto me, but with inexpressible pain. O eternity, eternity, how long!'

This is, indeed, the last, but lamentable end of profane swearers, who shall confess the equity of God in their torments; nor let the petty swearer think that he shall escape with impunity since the supreme Judge has said, that whatsoever is more than *yea*, or *nay*, is evil.

But, as the wicked shall be answered in their ways, so shall the righteous be in theirs. All their imperfect attainments, longings, wrestlings, hopes, desires, prayers, meditations, tears, godly sorrows, spiritual joys, and the seeds of every other grace, shall come to a comfortable conclusion at last. Now they serve God with weakness, but then they shall enjoy him with a vigorous immortality. They sow in tears, and go weeping heavenward, but shall possess him in a triumphant state, where sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away.

MEDITATION XXI.

Thinking on a dead friend.

Spithead, May 10, 1758.

A MELANCHOLY gloom had well nigh spread its midnight shades over my brooding mind, when thinking on a dead friend, whom I represented to myself as no more;

but, all on a sudden, a sacred sentence beamed refreshful on my soul; "That all live unto God."

Let me then borrow a similitude, and suppose that my friends and I live under the government of a great king, who has vast dominions, and who has chosen for his royal residence, a pleasant, but remote province, where his palace stands, and where he keeps court, shewing himself in kingly glory, and excellent majesty, while we live, compared to the royal country, in a howling wilderness, a dry and thirsty land, but still under the sceptre and protection of the king. And farther, let me suppose, that this great king (which would be stupendous condescension in him) had conceived such a regard for my friends, that he had given his royal word, that he would send a noble guard, so soon as he thought fit, and fetch them home to himself, that he might bestow on every one of them, not a dukedom, but a kingdom, a crown, and excellent majesty. Now, would I storm at the guard, or murmur at their errand? Yea, would not I rather give the messengers an hearty welcome, and bless their august sovereign; and the more so, if I had the royal promise also of being myself transported thither?

Then, is there any promise like his, whose counsel stands fast, and whose faithfulness cannot fail? Is there any guard like that of heavenly angels? Or any happiness like the celestial felicity? And, if these things be so, is not the state of the dead happy beyond conception that die in Jesus? Now, the glory of my departed friend, infinitely transcends the blaze of created grandeur. Mortality is put off, and immortality put on; their house is not of this building, and so not of this frame, nor on this foundation, but eternal in the heavens.

Upon the above supposition, my friend, and his kingly patron, might fall out, as nothing is more fickle than royal favour; but here, there is no fear of his falling from the favour of the Prince of life, because he rests in his love for ever, which kindles gratitude and love in the saints through endless day. In such a place, and in such a condition, would I not wish all my friends! Here we live to die, but there they live to reign! though to human nature, a little regulated sorrow may be allowed, yet, that boundless glory, and eternal bliss, which, to the highest degree, my departed friend enjoys, forbid me to bewail him to any

great degree, or lament him as lost, who is found of God, or as dead, who never could be said till now to live. Why should my sad reflections terminate on his crumbling clay, and not rather rise to meditate how his active soul is incessantly employed in the hosannah's of the higher house, and unweariedly exercised in beholding and blessing Jehovah and the Lamb? and thus convert my pensive thoughts into a Christian preparation for the same blessed passage to the same blessed place.

MEDITATION XXII.

The union between Christ and believers.

Spithead, May 14, 1758.

THERE is an union between Christ and believers, that every metaphor falls short of. No relation so near as he: The friend may prove false, the brother betray the brother, parents cast off the relation, and husband and wife be separated. Three strong figures hold forth this union, that of the tree and his branches, the head and his members, and eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of God. Now, what we eat and drink mixes with the mass of blood, and is so intimately assimilated with the fluids, that no power can separate it again; so, when by faith I receive the Son of God, and eat his flesh, and drink his blood, my soul partakes of the divine nature, till every power is holy, every affection heavenly, and till the life of Christ is made manifest in my body.

After this union, the soul and Christ cannot be separated; death may send the soul out of the body, but cannot send Christ out of the soul: And hereupon follows a commonness of interest. Christ renews the will, sanctifies the affections, enlightens the understanding, and claims the whole soul for his temple; yea more, he showers down his mercies, numbers his crosses, weighs his afflictions, wherewith he himself is also afflicted, and bears his sorrows. And all of Christ is the soul's; his righteousness, his love, his joy, his pardon, his mercy, kindness,

and compassion; his protection, direction, and conduct; his favour, his power, and sympathy, his light, and glory, his crown, and throne, his felicity, and his eternity in life. Thus the soul lives in Christ, and he in the soul. Their life is divinely interwoven; "you in me, and I in you." Hence, because he lives, they shall live also. Husband and wife must lose their relation by death; the branches may be cut off from the root, and the head, that sympathises with all, may lose some of its members: but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and a spirit can never be divided.

This mysterious union is bliss begun on earth, and heavenly felicity tasted below, and shall be the eternal admiration of angels, the envy of devils and damned spirits, and the wonder of the higher house.

MEDITATION. XXIII.

Imperfect attainments.

How pitiful are our highest attainments in this imperfect state! But, O how beautiful is it for the child of grace to grow daily in grace, and in the knowledge of God! to rise step by step, till at length complete in Him who is the pattern of perfection! Let it be my continual struggle, then, that my grace, like the shining light, may shine more and more till the perfect day of glory. I can never get so near to God, but there still remains, and through eternity will remain, a distance, to be destroyed by approaching yet more near. Mine attainments can never be so high, but there remains something attainable, which I have not yet attained. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." If this was the confession of the great apostle, what must I say, who am but just setting my head through the shadows of the night, and peeping into the dawning of divine things?

Hence let me press vigorously towards perfection, and not be contented with one beam of his glory, seeing he

is willing to reveal it all. Let me daily be drawing more near to him, till, Enoch-like, I walk with God, and have my conversation in heaven. Let me daily sit at wisdom's door, and stand at the gate of paradise, that, since as yet I cannot enter in, I may send in my faith to view the fields, the land of my Beloved, and returning, bring me the substance of the excellencies hoped for, the evidence of the glorious things not seen. Let me walk in the mount of God, with him whose form is like the Son of God. Let the desire of my soul be to thy name, and the remembrance of thee. Let an uninterrupted communication be broken up between the fountain of life and my soul, that I may bear no more the reproach of barrenness. And from that river of life that springs from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, let me daily drink, that I may thirst no more after the vanities of time. Let me live quite above the world, above its pleasures, and above its pains, disdain its flatteries, and despise its frowns. Let grace grow from one degree unto another, till, at last, O desirable perfection! it grow to glory. Let me hold thee, and not let thee go, till thou bless me, in perfecting my attainments, and crowning my happiness with the full fruition, unclouded vision, and uninterrupted communion with Jehovah, and the Lamb, for ever more.

MEDITATION XXIV.

On king's allowance.

May 19, 1748.

It is surprising, that government allows the least boy the same kind and quantity of provisions that any man or any officer aboard can claim; yet, it is no more than may be expected from royal generosity, since they, in their capacity, support the same cause, undergo the same hardships, rush into the same dangers, and expose their lives, though young and tender, at the commandment, and for the honour of the King.

Even so, every child of grace that is born into the family of God, has the same ample right to all the heavenly blessings. No sooner is he a son, than he is an heir of all the fulness of the covenant. The young convert is allowed by the King eternal, to plead the performance of all the promises, and to claim all the privileges that the aged saint can do.

Again, as nothing can be more pleasant, than to see early youth walking in the ways of holiness; so, often to such have bright manifestations of love, and large communications of grace, been given. And the love of espousals, and the kindness of youth, is a melting, a long remembered kindness. Have not some children gone off the stage, with such a gale of glory on their spirits, that aged saints have been at once astonished and ashamed?

Have not some youths, who have suffered martyrdom for the name of Jesus, been so assisted with grace, that they despised reproach, and smiled in the face of danger—been so refreshed with foretastes of glory, that they could contemn torment, and mount the scaffold with the same joy as if they had been going up the rounds of Jacob's ladder? And, have not some striplings on a death-bed had such a double portion of communion, that they could look on dissolution with delight, forbid their friends to pray for their recovery, and could meet their fatal moments with the same alacrity as a young prince going to the grand solemnity of his own coronation?

MEDITATION XXV.

On the blowing up of a ship.

Many are the appearances which death puts on, and in every one of them he is terrible. Sometimes his commission bears him to lay siege to the clay-walls for a long time, and to waste them away with a lingering consumption; and then he steals on them so insensibly, that they still entertain hopes of recovery, and believe themselves better a day or two before death. At one time he comes in flames of fire, at another time, in swelling floods; and

at another time, by a sudden stroke, he sweeps the man at once off the stage.

Though fire is terrible any where, yet much more so when the burning pile is surrounded by a boundless sea. It is, no doubt, a moving sight, to see a naked family, with wringing hands, and weeping eyes, deplore their *all* in flames! A family, just alarmed out of their midnight sleep, by the doleful cries of affrighted spectators, with no more than time to escape the burning blaze! However, by the assistance of water-engines, and a thousand friendly hands, the fire is got under, and half the house is saved; or, should all be consumed, they are still happy in the possession of life, and the charity of well disposed Christians. But the scene alters at sea, and is much more dismal, as the ship I speak of felt. Strong and well equipped, the glory of the fleet, she spread the pompous sails, suspended by the lofty masts, divided the rolling billows with the nimble keel, was rich in men and officers, and waved the honorary flag from the highest top; but, all at once, while no danger is dreamed of, and at noon, a fire bewrays itself below, too far advanced to be got under, too terrible to be beheld without trembling. It kindles fear in every breast, and nothing can be done. Signals of distress are fired, but only a poor merchantman comes to her assistance; yet dares not come too near, for fear of sinking by the wreck. The fire rages still, and it is strange, in the midst of water, to perish by fire. Were the oceans a plain, with what cheerfulness would they come down, and see the last plank in flames! But, death, gaping from the hollow waves, forbids them to descend, and every moment they expect to be blown into the air, and strewed in mangled legs and arms along the briny deep. What confused counsels! what feeble hands! what fainting hearts! what struggling thoughts! what staring eyes! what screams and cries! the ship's sides are lined with expectants of deliverance. They look every way, but in vain, for relief. One boat only appears, which dares not come along-side; yet many take the desperate leap, and falling short of the boat, plunge into the sea, and are seen no more, a terrifying sight to all behind! Still the fire increases, till anon the guns, loaded for action, sweep the crowded sides of the ship, of these very men they were designed to defend. Death is in the

waters, death is in the fires; it pursues behind, attacks before, and hedges in on every side! Old and young, who had survived the day of battle, are, in this melancholy manner, and on so short a warning, hurried into another world. The flames grow more furious, and on all sides lifeless bodies float around, a sad sight to surviving friends! Her own boats carry off a few men, but find not the way back again. At length, the masts break down, destroying numbers as they fall, and officers die undistinguished in the throng; while the admiral, stript of his uniform, hanging by an oar, struggles for life on the liquid wave till taken up. Many attempt to save themselves on pieces of the wreck, while the remains of the ship sink out of sight; but the angry waves wash them off their last relief, and they perish in the deep waters. Yet, mercy shines in the midst of shipwreck and death, for many escape with their life, though deprived of every thing else!*

O! strange to tell, will we quit with all that we have, for a few days, or a few years of our natural life, and yet quit with nothing at all for eternal life and endless glory? And, if fire that can be extinguished with water, or burn away to lifeless ashes, be so terrible, what must the fire of infinite wrath be, that shall burn up the wicked for ever? Finally, since my situation is the same, may I study to prepare for death at any time, and in any shape: then I shall face the flames, yea, fall into them, knowing, that my immortal soul, from these calcining fires, more fragrant than the spices of the east, shall rise a celestial phœnix, to live the many thousands of eternity, and never, never die.

MEDITATION XXVI.

Some slain by mercies, as well as by judgments.

Spithead, May 22, 1758.

Grace, and grace alone, can conquer the heart of man; for, have I not seen one, who had all manner of misfortunes in his family, substance, relations, charac-

* The ship alluded to, was Admiral Broderick's, which blew up in the Straits of Gibraltar.

ter, and person; his family carried off by strange deaths, his substance reduced to nothing, his pomp blown away like a cloud of smoke, his friends falling into grievous calamities, his character suffering by every tongue, the heavens revealing his iniquity, and the earth rising up against him, and his body long the dwelling place of loathsome disease, till death has sent his stinking carcase to the rotten grave; and yet the man remains a sinner to the last? Also, have I not seen the soldier, and the sailor, who in the day of battle had lost a leg, an arm, an eye, a piece of the scull, and some of their senses, have been made prisoners of war, and worn out with long confinement, and cruel usage, and yet these men remain proof against every judgment; incorrigible, though often corrected; stubborn under the strokes of heaven, inattentive to the language of the rod, and daringly brave an angry God? On the other hand, have I not seen a man, who had a flourishing family, growing up to maturity, like trees by a wall bathing in pleasures, held in common esteem, seeing his children's children, riches, with little industry, pouring in on him from every quarter, himself, though full of days, and covered with hoar hairs, yet possessing the vigour of youth, and his bones full of marrow, and yet this very man walk in a stated contradiction to the Author of all his blessings? Have I not also seen the man, who, when exposed on the thundering fields of war, or in the more terrible sea-engagement, has yet stood safe amidst surrounding dangers, and received not a single wound, while some where losing limbs, or falling down dead on every hand; or when perhaps the ship sunk, or a fire kindled in her bowels, that consumes the miserable crew, yet escaped the flames, survives the wreck, and lives to tell the astonishing story of his deliverance in the field, or on the flood? One would think that such a man would be melted down into gratitude, and live to his glory, who had been his help in the day of distress, and had covered his head in the day of war; yet he walks in a stated opposition to the Most High, and boldly offends the God of all his mercies. Thus we see one that is disappointed in every undertaking, crushed at every hand, yet remain impenitent under judgments; and we see another that succeeds in every wish, swims in created bliss, and

walks in the clear noon of prosperity, yet remain obdurate under love, and chargeable with an ingratitude towards Heaven, that would be accursed among men. To be slain by mercies, or by judgments, is a terrible death; it is the death of the uncircumcised in heart. When they are not improved, they give fury to the falling storm, and make the thunder bolts of wrath break with dreadful vengeance on their guilty heads through an endless evermore! O! then to be corrected in love, and to have my heart bettered by the sadness of my countenance; and, on the other hand, to have blessings, with a blessing, and all my mercies sweetly drawing my soul out to God.

MEDITATION XXVII.

On a fine fleet.

Spithead, May 23, 1758.

What means this splendid fleet, this expensive navy? No doubt, to deal destruction to our foes, and ride triumphant over the sea. Had the world been peopled in some parts from the planets, we should not wonder much to see fierce contests between the old inhabitants and the new. But the matter is not so, for we have all one father, and are all of one blood. Not very many ages ago, the contending monarchs lay in one loins, and slept in one womb; and all mankind are brethren. Whence are empires filled with anarchy, kingdoms with rebellion, families with terror and tears, while the brother butchers the brother, the son the father, the husband the wife, and the person that is driven into despair, rises in rebellion against his own life? It is because we are all in a state of rebellion against God. What a shame is it for men massacre one another, or depopulate whole nations, for a few furlongs of earth, which, in a few years hence, their eyes shall see in flames; an agonising sight to their ambition!

We think much of nation rising against nation, but, since Adam turned rebel, the whole universe is up in arms against Heaven, a few humble supplicants in all

ages excepted, who, having made peace through the King's Son, are again received into favour; but what are they to the many millions that are under the command of the god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience! What pity to see at this standard the sovereign and the swain, the statesman and the general, the soldier and the husbandman, the merchant and the mariner, the master and the servant; yea, and women who, in other wars, tarry at home! Moreover, besides this general insurrection against Heaven, there is a war in the breast of all believers, some of the old principles of rebellion rising up against the laws of their rightful Lord and King: "A law in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin:" however, grace shall at last prevail.

This is the army of Gog and Magog, which covers the face of the whole earth, and makes war with the Lamb; whom the Lamb shall overcome, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings. There is a day of slaughter coming, when the sword of his justice shall be drunken with the blood of his enemies; when those who would not have him to reign over them in the spirituality of his government, shall be slain before his face, and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Would the princes of the earth submit to the Prince of peace, soon should they beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and every man sit under his vine, and under his fig-tree. Were they more careful to extend the Christian religion, than to extend their conquest and commerce, more to grow in grace than in riches, and to improve more for eternity than time, how would our world be *Hephzibah*, and our earth *Beulah*, and the general contention between crowned heads and their subjects, through every land, be, who could live most like angels, and love most like seraphim!

MEDITATION XXVIII.

Setting sail.

Set sail, thou venturous rover, and let thy daring keel cut the dividing billow, and plow the briny deep. But whither art thou bound? To cruize on a tempestuous ocean, or dash against inhospitable shores.—Well, my soul, remember that thou also hast set sail, and art rapidly carried down the stream of time, to the ocean of eternity. I should consider under what latitude, and to what point I am steering; if under the latitude of the new birth, and a lively faith, I shall at last drop anchor at the haven of bliss; but if under the latitude of a natural state and unbelief, I shall be driven, by divine indignation, on the rocks of everlasting ruin, and tossed a deplorable wreck on the floods of wrath.

How ignorant is the heathen world of a future state! But, since the Son of God is come, and has taught us all the mysteries of the spiritual navigation, we launch at once into the depth of ages, and, in our exalted views, leaving land on every side, we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Why should I fear, or be dismayed; for shall I not have a prosperous voyage, and a pleasant landing, since Christ is both my pilot and my pole? since his Spirit is promised to lead and guide me into all truth; since the scriptures are my compass, a light to my feet, and a lamp to my path; since hope is my anchor, cast within the vail; faith my telescope, that gives me views of the world to come; self-examination my sounding line, to know what depth of water I am in, to try myself, whether I be in the faith or not; and my log-book a Christian diary, that I may tell them that fear God what he hath done for my soul; and since all the heavenly graces are like the extended sails, one sail being unfurled after another, first faith, which is to the soul as the main-sail to a ship, and adding to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly-

kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity. Were I once in such a happy state, my next petition would be, "Awake, O north wind! and blow, thou south;" fill my extended canvass, and carry me to glory.

MEDITATION XXIX.

Time to be redeemed.

Spithead, May 24, 1758.

Now I learn that time is precious, though mispent, though despised. I begin to set an higher value on that which is ever valuable, than I was wont to do; but, ah! I begin to resolve when golden opportunities are past; and lost for ever! God has been kind in giving me time, which I have not been cautious in spending, in improving; but, alas! blanks are not the worst, for I have not only trifled away, slept away, but sinned away, time. And, O! what great things are to be done in this little inch of time. God will have none of his servants idle; we must trade with his talents here, and the profit shall be ours hereafter. We must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, encouraged by this, that God works all our works in us. Thus, to speak, not like the proud legalist, but, like the laborious Christian, we must scale the walls of heaven (for holy violence is allowed) and take it by force. We must combat principalities and powers, and crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. I must stand upon my watch, keep a sharp look-out on all my foes, on the least sin, cut off hours which I have too often spent in (shall I call it) sinful sleep, and guard against trifling amusements, and superfluous visits; not that visits and recreations are simply sinful, but the excess therein. I must carefully attend to my time as it passes, for with grief I see that I cannot recal time when past. I have much work on my hand; I have to bear witness to the excellency of religion, and against sinners; my backslidings to bewail, my failings to amend, my conversation daily to inspect, my accounts to settle for the day of judgment (O to be found in Jesus in that day!) my treasure to lay up in heaven, my affections to set on things

above, my sins to mortify, my graces to strengthen, death to prepare for, eternity to improve for, my salvation to secure, God to live to, and the Lord Jesus daily to put on. Now, say if such an one has reason to be idle, or to trifle time away?

MEDITATION XXX.

In view of an Engagement.

May 24, 1758.

A FEW days hence, and we shall be contending with the foe; death will fasten his cold hands on many of us, and numbers shall be dropping into an unknown, anlawful, an endless eternity!

Though this is an event that will certainly take place, yet we are all thoughtless and secure, merry and unconcerned, as if it were of no moment to change states, and enter into an invisible world. Ask us all, one by one, if we are afraid we shall die in battle? and all of us to a man, have the fond hopes that we shall escape without a wound. But it would look better, if each of us were saying, 'perhaps it may be I, perhaps it may be I, that shall be slain.' Though my station be not so dangerous as that of some, yet, in my situation, some now and then are killed, and I rejoice that when I am in danger, I dare not trust the sides of the ship for my defence, but thy divine protection, which is better to me than a thousand bulwarks. Let me neither build on false hopes of life, nor be filled with slavish fears of death, but be prepared for all events. In the mean time, I plead that our fleets may be defended, our foes defeated, an honorable peace concluded, and an end put to the effusion of human blood. And I also plead, that thou wilt put a covering on my head in the day of battle, that I may praise thy power, and sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning.

MEDITATION XXXI.

On our Lord's displaying his divinity on the Sea.

Spithead, May 26, 1758.

Till now, I never observed that our Lord, in the days of his flesh, performed cures, and wrought miracles on the sea. At one time, from the surrounding multitude he steps into a ship, and teaches thousands attentive on the shore; and, after finishing his sermon, makes the unsuccessful fishers cast their nets again into the sea, who catching a great draught of fishes, are also caught themselves, and made fishers of men.

Another time, he will go over to the country of the Gadarenes, for there was one there, the prey of the terrible, and captive of the strong, whom he is pleased to deliver. So he enters into a ship, and his disciples, the close attendants on their Master, go along with him; but, while his human nature, fatigued with the toils he daily underwent, is fast asleep, a tempest came down on the ship, either sent by Providence, that, in rebuking it, he might display his divinity, or perhaps satan, who is the prince of the power of the air, was permitted to send out the fiercest storm which his hellish rage could effectuate, to make the affrighted boatmen row back again, and prevent the happy passage. However it was, his terrified disciples awoke him, and his word makes the fierce winds fall asleep, and his presence in a little makes fiercer fiends cry out, when turned out of their long possession. O how pleasant to think, that he who came from heaven to earth to save sinners, goes over a lake to save a soul or two; and though he comes in love unsent for, yet he goes not away, till desired to depart!

Again, our great Lord, after feeding the multitude with spiritual and earthly bread, constrains his disciples, who, it seems, were loth to move a foot without his presence, to go into a ship, while he sent the multitude away; after which he retires into a mountain to pray; but, by this time, they are tossed with a double tempest, one beating their ship without, and another disquieting their soul

within. It appears they had entered the ship between six and nine in the afternoon, and were tossed on the waters till between three and six in the morning, a long time indeed to the trembling disciples. The scene is altered now, for before they had no more to do but awake their Lord, to make the tempest fall asleep; but, though they saw not their dear Master, yet he saw their distress; and, after letting it heighten to an extremity, to sweeten their deliverance, he comes a-foot upon the flood, and journeys straight to their vessel. The disciples (no doubt, in the morning watch, looking out for land) saw him, and supposing it had been a spirit commissioned to overset them altogether, it added so much anguish to their anxiety, and terror to their trouble, that they *cried out*. But how soon does his kind reply check their fears, *It is I, be not afraid*. Peter, after asking liberty, comes down to welcome him on the watery element; but winds above, and waves beneath, make Peter's faith stagger so much, that our kind Lord must stretch forth his hand and save him. No sooner did he enter the ship, than nature is composed; nor needs he speak a word, his very presence calms the tempest, and the winds immediately forbear to blow upon the barge, where their Creator is a passenger. How happy, then, the soul where he abides for ever! This sudden change in the storm effected a no less sudden, but much more momentous change in the minds of the astonished spectators, who are all at once brought over to a belief of his divinity: "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

How often might the observing mariner say of him who did ride through the sea with his horses, through the heaps of great waters, that he hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet! How often sends he out the storm that puts us to our wits end, and again calms the dreadful hurricane, to our great comfort! "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

MEDITATION XXXII.

A memorandum for him that goes abroad.

June 28, 1751.

SOMETIMES the call of Providence, sometimes a covetous heart to amass riches, carry men abroad. If a man cannot exercise his religion with liberty in his native country, which he can find in another land, then he may be said, instead of going abroad, only to go home. But, on the contrary he that wanders from the place where God delights to dwell, and relinquishes Zion, which God has called his rest, may indeed be said to go abroad; and unless his reasons are valid, when impartially weighed, he ought not to go. On no account shouldst thou go with a design to remain, unless the gospel gladden the distant region; but when thou art away, remember a few things, that thou mayest not forget thyself.

1. Be always under the impression of God's omnipresence and omniscience. Thou canst never wander out of the hollow of his hand, or swim beyond his ken.

2. Mind the terrible tribunal, where the complete register of all thine actions shall be brought forth; such and such a sin at home, such and such a sin abroad, with such and such aggravations.

3. Know, it is better to stand alone, than fall with many. It will not excuse thy wickedness, that thou wast among the wicked, for sinners shall be bound in bundles, that they may burn the fiercer.

4. Think much on death, that thou mayest not be too much charmed with the vanities of life.

5. Oppose sin in others with courage, for the righteous shall be bold as a lion; though the wicked flees when none pursues.

6. Remember the deceitfulness and uncertainty of riches; so shalt thou neither be puffed up with the possession, nor pained at the loss of them.

7. Be not jeered out of thy religion, or flouted out of thy devotion; better be the object of man's ridicule, than the subject of God's wrath.

8. Set not thy heart on any intended acquisition abroad, and so thou shalt not return home disappointed.

9. Remark providences, and thou shalt never want them to remark.

10. Let Zion and the people of God have a place in thy prayers, and thou shalt again have a place in Zion among the people of God.

11. Since thou canst not have God in his public ordinances, seek the God of ordinances in private daily; and, when deprived of the preached word, esteem and peruse the written word the more.

12. Be not hasty in making acquaintance, nor rash in chusing thy friends.

13. Mediate often; a secret good rises from this secret exercise.

14. Examine thy condition often; it is the sign of a bankrupt never to open his books, nor look into his accounts.

15. Let prayer be thy daily pleasure and employ. To be much in the presence of an earthly king makes a courtier; but the presence of the King of kings makes a Christian, an angel.

16. Think much on the unseen world, and let the certainty of that which is to come, dispel the delusion of the present, which passeth away.

17. As thou mayest never again see thy native country, and thy father's house, let heaven be thy native country, and then death shall bring thee to thy better home.

18. Eye God's glory in all, and prefer the approbation of God and thine own conscience, to the applause of men.

19. Double thy diligence. Satan will double his temptations, sins and snares will multiply around thee; therefore multiply thy cries to God, keep in thy strong hold, and act faith on him at all times.

20. Remember that the Sabbath is alike holy in all latitudes, and should be sanctified with the same sincerity in Britain and Japan: for, though Christendom for a while may be absented, Christianity is never to be abandoned.

21. Beware that thou live not to thyself, the world, or for time; but live above the world, for eternity, and to God.

MEDITATION XXXIII.

How the Sabbath, or Lord's Day, is to be sanctified.

Spithead, July 15, 1758.

WHILE my situation is in a place where the Sabbath seems to be forgot, what can be more proper than to ask myself, How the Sabbath is to be sanctified? Then the Sabbath is to be sanctified by all men, in all places, throughout the whole world, and during the whole day;—is to be sanctified by breaking off from sins, abstaining from pleasures at other times allowed, and laying aside callings on other days lawful;—is to be kept holy, outwardly, by the man, and his actions; inwardly, by the mind and its thoughts: But we may be employed in works of necessity and mercy, by defending ourselves and others, our cattle and substance from fire and water, from wild beasts and mad dogs; by feeding the poor, comforting the afflicted, and showing mercy to all in distress. But, on the other hand, this day is profaned by men of every rank; in the palace, by unnecessary levees, by introducing strangers, noblemen, and ambassadors into the royal presence, and by holding privy-councils without urgent necessity. Abroad the world, this blessed day is profaned by gaming, riding for recreation, taking unnecessary journeys, visits, banquetings, and marriages; taking too much time up in dressing our bodies, allowing ourselves to sleep longer in the morning, and go sooner to bed, that day, than on any other; cloying our spirits, that should be active in spiritual exercises, by living sumptuously, and above our ordinary method, on that day;—by frequenting vain company, or using carnal discourse, for, as the prophet observes, where he forbids to "speak words" that because we on the Sabbath can speak little to advantage, it would be much to our advantage to speak little:—by traversing the streets after sermon, or walking in crowds to fields, gardens, and such like places; though, Isaac-like, we may go alone to meditate in the field;—by having roving looks in church, or allowing ourselves or others to sleep;—by diverting our eyes out at doors, or windows, with every thing that passes

by:—by wandering thoughts, and idle themes:—by going to public houses, coffee houses, and such like places, reading histories or newspapers, telling news or idle stories;—by jesting, laughing, or too much mirth, and not having a composure of spirit becoming the dignity of the day;—by carrying on love-suits, or gallanting sweethearts on that sacred day, designed for nobler entertainment;—by buying, selling, or exchanging goods of any kind, laying wagers, shaving, cleaning houses or kitchen furniture on that day; by flocking to harbours to see ships set sail, bringing stores and provisions on board on that day;—by washing decks, making and mending ropes, scraping births, sewing clothes, writing letters to friends, journals, and log-books, which may be done the ensuing day;—by whistling, singing profane songs, and playing on musical instruments:—by building bridges, ships, boats, and other such vessels;—by viewing our fields, plantations, orchards, gardens, corns, and cattle, to see if all be in a flourishing condition;—by surveying new houses and inclosures, or any thing that occurs to us by the way, in going to, or coming from church;—by needless compliments, and useless congratulatious, multiplied to excess, when friends fall in our way;—by postponing operations at hospitals, and infirmaries, till this day: and by every thing whereby the glory of God, the edification of others, and the good of our own souls, is not pursued and promoted.

This heavenly day is wholly to be employed in public, private, and secret devotion, in the congregation, with our families, and by ourselves alone; setting our affections on things on high, and studying to have our conversation in heaven, showing a proper concern for the great salvation, and preparing for the world to come. Alas! then, I see how little I know of Sabbath-sanctification, and of being in the Spirit on the Lord's day! And, alas! how is this day profaned, by land and sea! at home and abroad! in our fleets, and in our armies! in country, and in town! by people of all ranks, and by persons of all professions.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

Anchoring off an enemy's coast.

Cancal Bay, June 21, 1753.

Now we are not far from land, but, however fierce the storm, we must not set a foot on shore, else we should soon find ourselves in the power, and at the mercy of our enemies. Even so it fares with the wicked, who are at war with the God of the whole earth. Now, in the day of patience, they can put off without making friendship with God; but what will they do in their last extremity, in the day of visitation, and in the desolation that shall come from far? To whom will they flee for help, seeing they will not lay claim to one promise; and have no interest in him that made the promises? How will they stand when the storm pursues behind, and no shelter presents itself before? And how will it gall them to see the saints in quiet resting places, and themselves exposed for ever to the tempest?

But although we may not land here, yet we may return to our own king's dominions, where we shall be joyfully received. But it is not so with the sinner, who is in rebellion against Heaven. Whither shall he flee from God, or where can he hide himself from his omniscient eye? How shall he get without the reach of his all-present arm, or escape the stroke of angry Omnipotence? God he has disobeyed, Christ he has rejected, the promise he has despised, sinned away the day of grace, and trampled on the patience of Heaven: So, when the Judge shall come in flames, and it shall be very tempestuous round about, what will he do? To what God can he go? To what Saviour can he cry? To what hand can he turn—to whom shall he deplore himself—and in what ear make his moan? What promise can he plead, or to which of the saints can he turn? Ah! God is his inexorable Judge, and the Saviour is no more his friend; all hopes perish, all helps fail, all friends forsake, pity has no ear to his complaint, and mercy no compassion on his moan! O how miserable are the wicked, then, who thus on oceans of burning brimstone, shall be exposed to the storms and tempests of eternal wrath, and never, never see a shore!

But, on the other hand, how happy art thou, O saint! Every land is the property of Him who in all his vast possessions is thine by promise. He is thine who can make enemies entreat thee well in adversity: he is thine who is not only the God of the whole earth, but the possessor of heaven and glory; who is not only the Prince of the kings of the earth, but the Father of eternity who holds the waters in the hollow of his hand. Thou art safe, therefore, upon the depths; and though thou shouldst never see thy native country, yet thou shall make, when thy course is finished, the land that lies afar off.

MEDITATION XXXV.

Coasting on a country of another religion.

Under sail, 1758.

Since the foolish sons of men fell a building their own confusion, what a difference of tongues has taken place! Hence, though I was ashore on that land, I could neither understand, nor be understood, but by an interpreter. But, since defection entered the Christian church, how, in some lands, is all gone to confusion!

Still the Christian name continues, but primitive Christianity is rooted out there, where a pretended successor of Peter is the fulfilment of that prediction, which mentions the coming of the man of sin, and which to me confirms the truth of the scriptures. They have turned the purity of religion into the pomp of superstition; the simplicity of the gospel, into mumbling and muttering of prayers, in an unknown tongue; and the spiritual rule over the flock of God, into a temporal dominion over the kingdoms. They have let go the kernal and substance of religion, for the shell and show; hence, such adorning of churches, and such abundance of altars and images. There the man of sin sways his midnight sceptre, for filthy lucre, forgiving sins which God will never acquit, because in a way God never appointed, nor will approve of; and, trampling on the divine command, prostitutes sacred

things; hence baptising of bells, consecrating places, water, &c. It were irksome to repeat their impostures, and spiritual whoredoms, with which the nations are drunk; but, what a pity it is to see them, in the matters of religion, go hood-winked to hell! And men so polite, learned, and expert in other respects, so easily imposed upon in the concerns of their salvation! When shall the brightness of the coming of the Son of man, in the purity of the gospel, which is the sword that proceeds out of his mouth, make the kings, who now support, hate the whore, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire?

How great is the happiness, then, of a reformed land, where the glorious truths of Christianity are not concealed from any, where the poor have the gospel preached to them, and the scriptures loosed from their dark originals, in their mother tongue, and where the people are allowed, according to the primitive institution, to commemorate, in both kinds, the death and sufferings of our dearest Lord! Wo to them that dwell among a people that are terrified for Papal bulls; that put light for darkness, and darkness for light, good works in the place of justifying righteousness, and the Pope in the seat of God; who, not having attained to the spiritual knowledge of the Redeemer, enflame their affections, and kindle their devotions, by gazing on sensible representations of a suffering Saviour, who can only be beheld savingly by the eye of faith. Though with our bodily eyes we could see Jesus expiring on the cross in deepest agony and pain, which were better than a thousand crucifixes, and lively pictures, it could only move pity in us to him as a tortured man, but could not beget in us the faith of his divinity; hence so many unconverted spectators of the awful scene; and hence still the lifeless devotions of the blinded Papists.

O! then, that the days of the Son of man would beam on the Christian churches, such as Rome enjoyed when first obedient to the faith; that they might cast off the yoke of the imperious whore that sits on many a hill, and deliver their souls that dwell in spiritual Babylon! O! then, that the Son of Righteousness would arise with healings in his wings, and with his glorious beams dispel the darkness from the nations, and the gross darkness from the people, that Rome, with the lesser Asia, may return

to their former purity, to their first love, and over the revived universe there may be but one Lord, and his name one.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

The Masts.

At sea, June 25, 1758.

How do the stately masts thrust their head into the sky, and see the breaking billows far beneath them! Even so sovereigns and princes are exalted far above their subjects. But, for as high as the mast is raised above the hull, yet its safety is only by being sunk into the very body of the ship; so is the king's honour, and the prince's safety, in the multitude of their subjects.

Of what service could a ship without masts, or masts without a ship be? So in the body, political, spiritual and natural, Infinite Wisdom has made every member subservient to another, that there may be no schism.

Without masts, which support the tackle, and expanded sails, a ship could move no where, but would lie like a wreck on the waters; so without rulers, and subordination, must a people perish in tumult and confusion.

If the masts are exalted in the view of all, they are exposed to tempests from every quarter; so fares it with men of station and power, they are hated by one, and envied by another, reproached by a third, and undermined by a fourth.

In a storm, or tempest, it is sometimes necessary, in order to save the ship, to cut the masts by the board; so, sometimes to save a state, or nation, it is necessary to dethrone a cruel, an obstinate oppressor, and chase away a tyrant.

If the hull is rotten, and leaky, though the masts be never so strong and fresh, yet the vessel may perish in the deep waters; so, if the people be irreligious, and licentious, the prudent conduct and probity of the best kings cannot prevent their rushing into ruin.

It is only when a ship goes to sea, with her masts and top-masts in order, and all her sails unfurled, and filled by

the gentle breeze, that she makes so grand an appearance to the peopled shore; for, stretching into the boundless ocean, she lessons gradually till she can be seen no more: Even so, the men who now are famed over half the globe, shall in a little be lost to human eye, on the ocean of eternity, and have no more concern with time.

When the ship is grown old, and accounted no more fit for service, she is brought ashore, and broken up, and then the stately masts lie equally humble on the ground with the meaner planks, or very keel; even so, in death, shall all flesh return to dust, and the distinctions of a few days shall no more avail them, shall take place no more. May a belief of this influence me while I live below.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

Upon one being put under confinement aboard.

Under sail, June 26, 1758.

Truly we might be surprised to think that one could be closer confined in a ship at sea, than only to be in it; for, what is the vessel but a floating prison, where the closest confinement can only deprive a man of a few paces? Where can the man go, who has nothing over him but the canopy of the sky, or around him but the liquid ocean? Yet to be forbid to walk the very deck, to be locked in the cumbrous irons, and put under the care of the sentinel, and his naked sword, are marks of anger and restraint.

Even so, a man may be straitened in himself, a prisoner at home, though he might range the whole globe, and find himself fettered with grief, and manacled with sorrow, pensive amidst his pleasures, and dejected among his friends.

Wherever these prisoners are permitted to go, they are always attended with the sentinels in arms; so the man whose conscience is awakened, shall find a constant companion, and unwearied reprover, who will either reprove to purpose, or reproach for ever.

When a man has transgressed the martial law, neither money nor friends sometimes can prevent punishment; so nothing in the world can preserve from, or enable to support a wounded spirit. If the stroke comes from above, so must the relief. How poor are all possessions to a person that has not peace within!

One of these prisoners mutters and complains, is peevish and displeased at the sentence of his superior, but it avails him nothing; just so, to repine at affliction, and complain on Providence, is the mark of an unsanctified heart, and cannot shorten our trials, or alleviate our troubles, but must sharpen our sorrows and heighten our sufferings.

But another of them enjoys himself in his confinement, is cheerful and composed, knowing that a very short time shall restore him to liberty; even so, the saint, amidst his afflictions, can be happy and serene, knowing that the period is not far distant that shall translate him into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Paul and Silas could sing praises in a prison, because when God giveth quietness, none can cause trouble.

In a word, what are all the people in the ship, but prisoners, whether they approve or disapprove the expression? Even so, what is the body but a clog, what the whole world but a confinement to heirs of immortality, and expectants of heaven? In this we earnestly groan for the better state, and long to be uncloathed, not that we would peevishly drop our existence, be turned out of house and home, but only change our prison for a palace, and this corruption put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, and we walk at perfect liberty through everlasting day!

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

The prophet's description of the wicked.

How just, how adequate, how expressive the divine description, "The wicked are like the troubled ocean, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast forth mire and dirt!" When the tides have teemed their wrecks on the

inmost shores, and in the ebb have left the smoóthed sand, all looks gay, and one would think the bottom of the ocean is swept, and washed of all its wrecks and weeds; but the next tide proves my conjecture false, and spreads a fresh proof of my deception on the shore: Just so it is with the wicked, when I think they might have emptied themselves of oaths, imprecations, and filthy communications, accomplished their wickedness, brought forth all their vileness, and wearied themselves in committing sin, yet, without intermission, they proceed from evil to worse.

As there is a continual growth of weeds, and accession of other wrecks, every tide, therefore, spues out mire and dirt; so, out of the evil treasure of the heart, evil things continually proceed. But the civilized sinner has nothing to boast: for, though his words may not be so vile as those of abandoned wretches, yet, as they pour from the carnal mind, and the carnal mind being enmity against God, can produce nothing pleasing in his sight, so they are vile before God: Therefore, though not so disagreeable in a sober ear, as the profane swearer, obscene talker, or unprofitable jester, yet, not coming from a sanctified heart, are accounted sin in his eye, who is purity itself, and with a pleasant countenance beholdeth the upright.

Sometimes the raging seas ebb, and leave their shores clean and comely, but, all of a sudden, they return with fresh defilement, and scatter over them mire and dirt. Even so have I seen some persons, by a temporary repentance, appear to forsake their former courses and to lead a new life, but, all of a sudden, like a spring-tide, their wickedness breaks out with greater violence than ever, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

As nothing less than the voice of the Almighty can calm the restless ocean, and say to the raging sea, Peace, be still; so nothing less than infinite power (let not mortals presume, let not sinners despair) can convert transgressors, and make their heart precious as a spring shut up, pleasant as a fountain sealed.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

On the patience of God with sinners.

Off France, June 27, 1758.

Verily thou art God, that thus bearest with the wickedness of men, though of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Did our superior officers meet with equal disobedience to their mandates, the same irreverence, contumely and reproach to their very face, from these abandoned wretches, would they put up therewith? No; death, or some dreadful punishment, would suddenly be inflicted on the daring transgressors. God will be glorified in the bright display of all his divine perfections; and the desperate madness of sinners against the heavens, and their blasphemous talk against the most High, cannot prevail with him to change his purpose, and punish them before the time appointed, because he is God: Nor shall their miseries and bemoaning, their anguish and their intreaties, make him spare them a moment longer, when the appointed day comes, or mitigate their torments, because he is God. A thousand years are with God but as one day, seeing all eternity is his immoveable NOW. Now, what are the few unhappy years of a thoughtless desperado's life, but as a few moments to a criminal betwixt his sentence and execution? So God will fill up the measure of his patience; and if they fill up the measure of their sin, in the time of God's patience, his justice shall fill up the measure of their punishment in the day that his thundering right hand shall cast the strength of his fury and fiery indignation on them for ever. He is silent now in the day of his long-suffering, and they will not hear the voice of his goodness; but he will loudly accost them in the day of his anger, and they shall hear the thunders of his wrath. God, by his long-suffering, has a double work on the wheel, his wrath to shew, and his power to make known on the vessels of wrath, thereby fitted to destruction; and the riches of his glory, to make known on the vessels of mercy, who are thus prepared for glory. Let the sinner acknowledge the patience of God, and be led to repentance; and the

saint adore the patience of God, and be encouraged to perseverance; and may God be glorified in all his divine perfections.

MEDITATION XL.

On the excellency of the Christian religion above the Jewish, with respect to a Traveller.

Off France, June 28, 1753.

The Jewish religion consisted in a noble and emblematical assemblage of rites and ceremonies, which, though glorious, was to give place to that religion which could boast of a triumphant majesty, a supereminent glory, and permanent duration. That was attended with external pomp and grandeur, the beauty of this lies in its simplicity and spirituality.

How uncomfortable were my situation here, if I could not approach the altar that sanctifies the gift without being seen, praise God without the high-sounding cymbal, psaltery, or harp, and offer up to God my sacrifice in mine own breast! If I could not be sprinkled with the blood of cleansing, without the high-priest using all the round of ceremonies! if I could not repent, and be accounted clean, without external washings, and if I behoved to look towards Jerusalem, in my adorations! But, as a Christian, I may pray every where, and, even in the midst of the unclean, may offer up my sacrifice of mental praise; yea, to God who sees in secret, and knows the heart, I may pray in secret: or, when that is denied, I may in my own heart pour out to him my supplication, and, in the midst of confusion, may meditate on his glory and goodness. And, as I may thus freely come to him, wherever I am, so he whose fire of old came down, and consumed the sacrifice on the altar, in mercy can come to me, and kindle a flame of love in my soul, and speak kindly to me, from off the invisible mercy-seat, Christ Jesus. Then there is one perfect sacrifice which, every where, and always, I shall keep in eye; one fountain at which I shall always wash; one Intercessor, and great

High-Priest, whom I shall always employ, and through whom I shall seek access to God, waiting to be blessed at last in the full enjoyment of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, world without end.

MEDITATION XLI.

Coasting along another king's dominions.

Under sail, July 1, 1758.

The contented swain may travel far and near, yea, live and die in his own king's dominions; but a fair wind may soon fetch him that plows the flowing ocean, where his sovereign cannot claim an inch of land, or if he stands to sea, he may soon find himself distant from all shores, in an unmeasurable world of waters, which owns no superior but Him who formed the sea and the dry land. I may offend my prince here, and yet fly out of his reach, and bid defiance to his rage; but if I sin against God, whither shall I fly for help, or how shall I escape? Britain and India are alike before him, height and depth are in his hand, and distance, which only bears relation to creatures, bears none to the Creator who is every where present, and filleth all in all. I may sooner deprive a rational being of self-consciousness, or hide me from myself, than keep concealed from Omniscience.

Would a king or an emperor, travel round the globe, many times he would find himself in kingdoms where he could claim no interest; but if I belong to God, I can claim his providence and protection in every dominion, and in every land. How well pleased would a young prince be, to travel home, in the dress of a stranger, through the extensive dominions of his royal father! Could he quarrel at hard usage, the homely fare, and the mean lodgings he must put up with by the way? Would it not quiet and content him under all, to call to mind that he is travelling home to the palace of his royal sire, where he should be welcomed by the loud acclamations of a splendid court, and embraced by the king himself? After this manner, while on his journey, would he address himself: "Though I pass as a stranger in these remote parts of my father's possessions, and unobserved,

because it is not as yet proper in the eyes of the king that I should be clothed in princely attire, yet, how am I delighted that all these kingdoms are under his government, tremble at his frown, and own his sovereignty: and though I now seem poorer than many of his subjects in these provinces, who have small estates in hand, yet I am so happy in the nobleness of my descent, in the dignity of my relations, in the propect of my future greatness, and approaching glory, that I would not change states with any of them; for, on the day appointed for my coronation, by the mighty sovereign, to whom I am so nearly related, I shall, in the sight of assembled thousands, receive a sceptre, and a crown." Even so, the saints are in all respects the happy ones, for the universe belongs to him who has a care of them. Distant climates, therefore, need not look strange to them, for, if they live near God, they can never be far from home.

MEDITATION XLII.

On hearing from friends.

St. Helen's, July 5, 1758.

He that has not left his affections and care in his native country, as well as his friends, is not a little refreshed by frequent accounts from them, that they are alive, and in prosperity. But all this will not satisfy him that sore longeth to see his near relation, and his native country, after being long absent from it. A thousand letters, written with all the tenderness of a father, embellished with all the rhetoric of paternal endearments, must give place to an hour's conversation, mouth to mouth, with that father whose kind and affectionate letters increased the filial regard, with that mother whose continual prayers and good wishes, have strengthened the affection of her son. Nothing less than seeing them face to face, talking with them friendly and freely, hearing all their state, and learning of all their welfare, can satisfy his longing, and quiet his struggling breast.

Even so, nothing can fully satisfy the desires of the soul that is born from above, and is a native of the better

country, but the immediate vision of God. All he receives below, only begets a disquietude in his soul, (but such a disquietude as delights) that cannot be at rest till wafted to the fruition of God. The brighter his views of heavenly things, the more ardent his wishes for the possession of them. Hence, says the aged, the experienced, and great Apostle Paul, who had been caught up into the third heaven, carried into paradise, and heard the unutterable language of bliss, "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

All the bright displays of the glory and goodness of God, which saints enjoy below, compared with what is reserved for eternity, is only a sight of his back parts. Now let us see the import of the metaphor: The face is like the fair epitome of the whole man, so that limners commonly draw no more than the countenance; the face turned away denotes indignation, but bright and smiling is a sign of favour; and again, the countenance is like the index of the mind, where we can see clouds gather, and tempests break, or peace and tranquillity within. Accordingly, we have these expressions in scripture, "Blessed are the people that walk in the light of thy countenance: Cause thy face to shine on us: Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled: Neither will I hide my face any more from them: As for me I shall behold thy face in righteousness." What, then, must the consummate happiness of that state be, where we shall see God face to face!

Then, Lord, the most that I can find below, is but a crumb to the banquet above. When thy appointed time comes, with what joy will I leave all these merciful communications of thy grace and good will, conveyed through thy word and ordinances (which, like letters of favour, assure me of the affection of mine exalted Head, and cheer me in the house of my pilgrimage) and go home to eternal, uninterrupted communion with thee! When, dear Lord, may my love and longing ask. When shall I see the face of my Beloved, that face that is fairer than the sun? When shall all the vast expectations of my faith be realized in glory? When shall my well-beloved who is unto me as a bundle of myrrh, lie, not for a short night, but through an endless day between my breasts? When shall distance be done away, that I may

approach thee, and never more be debarred from thy throne? When shall my soul, all eye, fix for eternity on thy excellent glory? As yet, I have only seen some passing glimpses of thy back parts; but there is an abiding, permanent, assimilating gaze on thy glorious countenance, which shall crown my felicity through endless ages. May not the soul that is espoused to that glorious Husband, who is the chiefest among ten thousand, long to see her husband, long for the marriage supper of the Lamb, and weary for the day of being brought home, to be for ever in his presence? Surely, were my love to him more, I should long more for him; but I am ready to take up with other lovers in his absence. The world, and the things of time, are busy to cool mine affection to the sacred suitor, the divine and unchangeable lover; but hence, all things that would divert my flame from him who is altogether lovely. When shall these eyes see him for myself, and not for another? I am like one born abroad, that has never seen his father, nor his friends; but am travelling home, and shall never be happy till I be with my best Friend. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, and the account has comforted my soul; but now I long to see thee with my eye, and be for ever ravished with the heavenly vision. Surely at my arrival at thy throne, O gracious Redeemer! when I shall see thy wonderful ascent to it, even by sufferings, the standing of thy saints about it, the apparel and entertainment of thy chosen ones, and all thy other glories, I shall know then that all the account which I ever heard falls infinitely short of thy majesty and glory. Let it, then, comfort me, that in a little thou shalt fulfil my request, satisfy my longing, and bring me home to be for ever with the Lord.

MEDITATION XLIII.

On the well of the ship.

Spithead, July 7, 1758.

One might be surprised, that when the ship admits very little water within, they should by a pipe from the ocean convey such a quantity, that the pump must be set a-work before it can be cast out again: Yet the device is

highly praise-worthy; for thus the corrupted, stinking, and poisonous dregs, are cast out, which, without this large addition of water, would never come within the stroke of the chain-pump, but would grow intolerably putrid, as it is well known to discolour solid metals, and affect every thing near it. Even so, original sin is that poison that lies deep within, contaminates all around, whose filth defiles all the powers of the mind, all the members of the body, and whose guilt makes the whole man obnoxious to all the miseries of time, to all the torments of hell. Again, sometimes Heaven is pleased to permit a person to fall into gross outbreakings, that thereby he may be led to see the corruption of his nature, and to bewail the spring from which such deadly streams proceed. Thus the psalmist confesses, that he, as well as all mankind, was conceived in sin, and born in iniquity. And wherever saving grace is displayed in subduing sin, there also the guilt of original sin is forgiven, and its filth taken away.

It is very remarkable, that God refines his own people, not only by afflictions, judgments, and mercies, but by sins; thus sometimes the air is purified by a thunder-storm: Hence, says God by the prophet Ezekiel, xiv. 9. and 11. "If a prophet be deceived, I have deceived that prophet, and the people that seek to him are also deceived, and they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity." Now, for what end is a prophet permitted to speak lies, and the people to seek to a lying prophet? That they might go no more astray, pollute his holy name no more, but that he might be their God, and they might be his people. Thus, Peter's pride and self-confidence is so cured by his denial of Christ, that when Jesus, after his resurrection puts to him a kindly question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" he dares not say, as formerly, O Lord, my love is such that I can die for thee, but humbly appeals to himself, "Thou knowest that I love thee." Our Lord repeats the question, and he returns the same answer; but a third time puts him to pain, 'Does my Lord distrust my love, doth he suspect its sincerity?' It is true alas! I have denied him, and he knows me better than I do myself; but my heart, conscious of sincerity, appeals to his omnisciency, "Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee."

Moreover, the daily experience of the saints will attest, that all their lifetime they hate and abhor that sin most by which they have most dishonoured God, and wounded their own souls. Alas! what daily cause have I to mourn over my depravity, whose life is blackened with daily outbreakings from this fountain that defiles! Hence so many vain thoughts, and low apprehensions of the holiness and majesty of God; hence so many trifling delights; hence such an eager pursuit of perishing pleasures, and polluted joys, which, on a narrow survey, and serious thought, I must throw all away.

But, such is the wonderful method of Him, whose ways are past finding out, that he saves by casting away, brings through hell to heaven; and, by one sin breaking out, makes the soul hate and abhor, fight and watch against all sin, and have daily recourse to the blood of sprinkling, and to the Spirit of all grace for divine assistance.

MEDITATION XLIV.

The company of the wicked.

Spithead, July 8, 1758.

When for our continual company we have the wicked, we cannot but continue our lamentation, and repeat our complaint, "Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar." When I have considered the carnal men, who know nothing of the power of religion, and the abandoned wretches, who have not even the appearance of religion, how should I esteem the company of saints here below, and the communion of the glorious hosts above! When the day of my dissolution comes, how shall I be transported to find myself among an assembly of sanctified ones, where religion, in its purity, is their eternal theme? Not an idle word among all the amazing multitude, nor one vain thought among the vast concourse! Their society is improving, and their conversation shall comfort for ever. No doubt but the wickedness of the present world will to the saints sweeten the sanctity of the world to come; and their own cor-

ruption, from which they cannot wholly rid themselves now, dignify that noble change, when corruptible shall put on incorruption, and mortality be swallowed up of life; so will their imperfect graces aggrandize their perfection in glory. What, then, shall be my happiness when my fellow saints shall be spotless flames of love, and I adore with them in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of perfect and perpetual peace! when the moving of their tongues in the praises of my dearest Lord, shall assuage all my former grief, and charm my ravished ear! when every soul shall attempt the loudest song, and highest encomium on our best Beloved! and when among the adoring throng, not one sinner, which are now so numerous, nay, not one hypocrite shall stand! O how shall we speak to one another of Him who is altogether lovely, and being transformed into his likeness, how amiable and agreeable shall we be to one another! For, like lines in a circle pointing to the centre, the nearer to which they come, the nearer to others they approach, till running into the centre, they unite in one another: Just so, dwelling in Christ, we shall be united to one another in love. Then I shall not only be free from my wicked company, but from every thing in my soul that can disquiet or give pain. No pollution from without, no corruption within, but all is perfect sanctity. O triumphant state of perfect liberty! where my companions shall not, as now, drive me from God, but as it were, draw me to the very throne: "Come, let us worship the Lord; I will go also." The forethought of that happy state shall comfort me till the days of my mourning be ended.

MEDITATION XLV.

On awaking at Midnight.

Now the silent night spreads its shadows on all, and calms the uneasy crew, who are locked fast in sleep, except those who are on duty; and never are they less offensive to God or men, than when in slumbers.

In a little, the busy world shall be awaked to pursue the affairs of life; but the greater part, in respect of spi-

ritual things, are fast asleep, yea chained among the dead; hence says the apostle, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Amidst the blackest gloom that dwells on midnight with respect to the natural eye, the soul is at no loss to view immaterial beings by the eye of her understanding, and to behold her supreme good by the eye of faith. Yea, a day dwells within the soul that is enlightened from above, even while shades of darkness surround the body; and this day is much more beautiful than the brightest sun-shine to the naked eye.

Though, through ignorance, I thought that all had been darkness in the universe till the sun was kindled up, yet I see that even then all was bright, unbounded, and eternal day; because God is light, and in him is no darkness, and he filleth all in all. But when God was pleased to bespangle a little track, a foot-breadth or two of space, with various globes, and on some of them to form creatures with bodily organs, which needed a material medium to judge of sensible objects, in this respect, "darkness was on the face of the deep;" for their comfort he created the light; and from the light he formed the sun, to illuminate the body: being still himself, the infinitely more glorious Light of the mind, so that whenever he is pleased to display himself in a special manner, the sun is darkened at his presence, as befel Paul when favoured with the heavenly vision. Now, had all been created spirits, like the angels, there had been no need for natural light, for the Father of spirits is to them the Fountain of light; and sometimes they have brought such a brightness with them from the throne of glory (like Moses when he came down from the mount of God) such a blaze of light spreading round about, as has amazed the astonished spectators. Thus neither the natural darkness of the night, nor the thick darkness, of sorrow, affliction, and woe, nor the pitchy darkness of death, shall spread a shade over those who have his presence, diffusing serenest noon in their souls wherever they go; as, on the other hand, the fallen angels, cast out of his favourable presence, are kept in chains of darkness, though allowed to roam over this universe in the noon-day beamings of the natural sun.

Again, a man may enjoy the light of life, and bask himself in the pleasant beams of affluence and peace, while nothing but a dark and stormy night surrounds his soul. As the evening-shadows mantle the world, so they produce a silence and tranquillity over all: but the darkness that seizes the soul from an angry or concealed God, awakens the keenest anguish, and pours storms and tempests in all the powers of the mind, which raise this complaint, "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." But what comfort may it yield me, that, though the nights seem long, the darkness thick, the tempests loud, and the thunders terrible, the Sun is on his way, will shortly rise, and afford eternal day! that I shall walk in the light of his countenance, and in his light see light clearly! Then, and not till then, "shall mine age be clearer than the noon-day, and I shall shine forth, and be as the morning."

MEDITATION XLVI.

On one cursing and swearing at an affront.

Spithead, July 10, 1758.

This discloses to me the dreadful confusion and deplorable passion which the wicked shall be put into at the tremendous bar! Hear that poor wretch, for a matter of no moment compared to his eternal felicity, roars, rages, foams, and blasphemes. What surprising, chilling, and unheard-of oaths, even where oaths are too much heard every day, pursue one another in his fiendlike fury? Scarce can he tell what troubles him for belching out hideous, horrid, and uncommon oaths, protestations, and imprecations, not to be allowed to return ever into the memory again but in a way of deploration.

Now, if such be the language of sinners on earth, what shall be their dialect in hell, when they shall turn their blasphemies against the blessed, but tremendous Avenger himself! when their kindling eyes shall swell with fury! Here they curse others, or invoke damnation on themselves; but then and there, they shall blaspheme God for his burning indignation, and, in perpetual rage and

fury, rise up against incensed Omnipotence itself; and this shall increase their torment, that they madly oppose their feeble power, and unsubdued enmity, against the infinite afflictor, whereby they, as it were, approve of their old rebellion against their rightful Lord, and make it evident that he is just when he condemns and punishes his foes. But O what a countenance will they put on, what passion, what revenge, what anguish, what rage, what horror, what burning envy in their soul, what rolling eyes, and trembling joints, what tormenting confusion of thought, what terrible disquiet, and consummate despair, will tear and prey on them for ever! Against whom will they stamp, frown, storm, and foam, like this desperado? Whom will they threaten? God, their eternal foe, is far above their reach, holds them down in chains of everlasting wrath, and roars against them with the thunders of his right hand for ever.

Now, as I heard expressions terribly strange, and oaths to me entirely new (which I pray may be so for ever, and never grate my ear again) from hence I infer, that the blasphemies of the damned, now past all hope, and filled with unrelenting enmity, are so extremely and inconceivably dreadful, so excessively horrid, that the most abandoned swearer, the master of the newest and blackest blasphemies on earth, comes not near them; just as the sharpest pains we feel in time, bear no proportion to the excruciating torments of the damned. This desperado's passion assuages by little and little, and he becomes himself by degrees; but there their passion and tumult ever grows, even against God. Their soul abhors him, and his soul also loathes them. O then to be wise, and learn wisdom from every thing I see!

MEDITATION XLVII.

God's equity in the eternity of torment.

July 10, 1758.

MAN is daringly bold to find fault with God, and tell him to his face, that his ways are not equal. To make a creature only to be miserable for some small offence, to

make a creature to be damned, they think is not just in a Being said to be infinitely just; or to punish a few follies in frail man, the extravagancies of a few days with eternal wrath, and the failings of a finite creature, that is crushed before the moth, with the whole collected fury of an Omnipotent God, an Almighty Avenger.

As to the first, God creates not to destroy, but still delighteth in mercy; yet, before any creatures rob him of his glory by a course of sin, he will magnify himself in their damnation. Again, shall the man that derides revelation, scorns to search the word of truth, contemns counsel, casts instruction behind his back, hates him that reproveth sins against his light, will not hearken to the reproofs of conscience, but runs into all sin with precipitance, and commits wickedness with greediness, dragging as many as he can with him to hell;—shall such a wretch (and generally such they are who have these sorry and pitiful pleas) talk of mercy? Would he have God to take him, sin and all to heaven, who would not forsake his sin for heaven, nor cease from wickedness for God? Those who will not receive mercy, who will not have a gift of salvation on God's terms, and in God's time, must expect damnation from him in due time, which shall measure with eternity.

I have, for a long time, been convinced of the punishment for sin being infinite (as far as creatures can sustain) and eternal, on account of the infinite Majesty against whom it was committed; because it is impossible for finite creatures, who despise the satisfaction provided by God, to satisfy in their own persons for one sin; and because the sinner continues, even in torment, the enemy of God and righteousness. But now I see another thing, even that punishment, infinite and eternal, is no more than the just reward of their sin; for the sinner employs all his thoughts, exerts all his might, and goes to the very utmost of his finite omnipotence (may I use the expression ?) against God. By his power, had he power equal to his impious inclinations, he would destroy righteousness out of the world, just as he does in his own breast; yea, could he effect it, he would pull the angels out of heaven, who daily tears the moral law in pieces; nay, could he rise in power, he would contend even with the Almighty, and take the government of

heaven and earth out of his hands who will not let God govern his poor insignificant self. Now, is it not no more than strict justice in God to punish to the uttermost of his power, those who sin against him to the uttermost of their power; and not to repent in casting the fury of his wrath on them who, in their sinning against him, knew no repentance? Moreover, is it not equitable with God to punish those as long as he lives, who sinned against him as long as they lived? So may an earthly king condemn to perpetual imprisonment a rebel or a regicide. Again, though their life was short and passing, yet how did they spend it, every moment of it, in abominable sin! and since they spend the eternity of their life (might I again use the expression?) against God, and would never cease to offend the everlasting Jehovah, were they to continue in their present state to perpetuity; therefore it is but just that he should punish them through the eternity of his existence. Finally, sinners have no grounds of excuse or complaint left, being well apprised of their danger in time, and therefore shall, through an eternity of torment, confess that their own ways have been unequal, but that God is just and equal in all his ways.

MEDITATION XLVIII.

Instructions from the communications of the wicked.

Spithead, July 12, 1758.

Sure, if ever grace dwelt in my soul, if ever I was among the saints I have been to blame, that had nothing to utter in commendation of religion, nothing to say in honour of God; or if I dropt a word or two, that I drew it not out into a discourse, and dwelt not longer on the theme; but if ever providence permit me to breathe again in the fragrant air of converse with the godly, I think I shall be more open hearted than ever I have been. Forgive me, Heaven; forgive me, saints; forgive me, sinners, who knows what good a good word might have done some of you; forgive me, my own conscience; and as I cannot excuse myself for time past, for opportunities lost, let me be more watchful in all time coming.

I am instructed to this by the open profanity of the

wicked. They are not ashamed to speak and talk in a strain which we would think the fiends of hell could not go beyond. They expose their secret sins in a manner which might make ordinary sinners blush. How soon they reveal their wickedness to one another, and let it be known to what society they belong, by baseness in the extreme! and shall thou, O saint! and I, when we shall meet not let it be known that we are heirs of the same promise, soldiers under the same colours, combatants in the same cause, servants of the same Lord, disciples of the same master, and expectants of the same glory? It is true, religion is a secret thing; its duties are to be performed in the closet, not in the street, and He who sees in secret will at the last day reward us openly. Again, we who bear the Christian name choose to be silent too often on serious matters, lest at any time, by gross outbreaking, we become a scandal to religion; or those who have not the root of the matter in them scandalize us for our religion. But as these wicked ones are under no restraint in their profanity, shall we, who make so high profession, be altogether silent on serious subjects? They avow their God, who is the god of this world; and shall we not avouch the Lord for our God? They are of their father the devil, and do his works; and shall we not walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever? Is not our Master more honourable, our service more noble, our encouragement more powerful, our reward more certain, our associates more eligible, and our delights and pleasures more permanent and divine, than all the wicked can boast of? Why then not talk to one another of the excellencies of our great Lord, his kindness to his servants, what befalls us in our pilgrimage, the surprising providences of our life, and the outlettings of his love to our souls? "Come, hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul," said the psalmist; and have we nothing to tell, no words wherewith we may comfort one another? Yea, we should speak in commendation of religion to all; for whoever mock, still wisdom is justified of her children; and scoff who will, we ought to do our duty. Then, in my present situation, all mine communings must be with my own heart; I must talk with myself, but must be silent to others; yet I may make my prayer to the God of my life, express my trou-

ble to him, and pour out my complaint before him, pleading, that as the years are full of evil, and the days of grief, so he may comfort me.

MEDITATION XLIX.

Sorrow for sin a sign of grace.

Spithead, July 13, 1758.

Surely I am not so zealous for the God of heaven as I ought to be. Had I this day received an affront, or had any spit in my face, would not the affront go to bed with me, sleep and wake with me, yea, disturb me of my sleep? Where is, then, my zeal for God, that I can quietly go to rest, and with an easy mind, when I see and know sinners avowedly wound the glory of God, spit in the face of Divine majesty; daringly break all thy commandments, think thy precepts are a jest, trample on thy reproof, laugh at thy threatenings, brave thy thunders, and defy thy wrath? While their practice is so cursed, should my spirit be so unconcerned? Should the loyal subject be quiet and still when he knows a plot of rebellion is forming against his king, by whom he is maintained, yea, beloved? Then, what shall I say of these obdurate sinners? I complain against them to thee; I hate their conduct, I lament their infatuation and deplore their case. The day is conscious of their crimes, the night attests their debauches. I deplore and protest against all their oaths and profanity, their obscenity and vileness, their Sabbath-breaking, and all their other abominations. They fly from thee in the day of thy grace, and shall be punished with everlasting destruction from thee, and the glory of thy power, in the day of judgment. May thy honor never be less valued by me, nor I less grieved for the wounding thereof, that so many value it so little. May sin never become less odious to me by being committed before me; and let my sorrow for sin in others testify my innocence, and that I have no delight therein, while my soul shall mourn in secret places for them who hate holiness and love death.

MEDITATION L.

On hearing a rumor of peace.

Spithead, July 19, 1758.

With what a cheerful countenance did the greater part appear to hear the report of peace! These poor fellows, some of whom were impressed to the field, some to the fleet, now worn out with war, and long absent from their nearest relations, and their dearest friends, exult at the very thought of peace, and feel an inward satisfaction that refreshes every power. How then, O my soul! who art engaged in a more cruel war, carried on by more bloody foes, pursued without intermission, with all the rage of the roaring lion, the cunning of the old serpent, and vigilance of the pit, the issue of which is of much greater moment than the struggles for empire, or the strife of kings; how shouldst thou rejoice at that eternal peace which shall take place when all thy foes shall fall before thee, and death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed for ever! Then thou shalt not only quit the field with safety and honor, but come off more than conqueror through him that loved thee!

Are men so fond to quit the martial plain, and taste the sweets of peace! What madness then by sin to rise in rebellion against Heaven, and maintain a war against God, to run on the thick bosses of his buckler, and defy Omnipotence himself, who can crush worlds with a frown, and punish the most stubborn offenders!

How pleasant for the man that has been often in danger and death, who has long heard the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war, who has been covered with wounds and blood, and been daily beset by cruel bloodthirsty foes, to dwell in peace, and walk at safety, to heighten his present happiness by the remembrance of his past danger, assured that he shall never more be in a state of war, but spend his days in peace and quiet. Even so, the soul that has been often in danger from spiritual death, has long heard the sound of Sinai's trumpets, the curses of the fiery law, and war denounced from Jehovah's throne, has not only been sore buffeted and wounded,

but accounted itself free among the dead, being daily beset by sin, and its outbreakings, Satan and his temptations; how sweet for such a soul to be filled with peace and joy in believing, to have the intimation of pardoned sin, and acceptance through the Beloved; and, instead of storms and tempests from Sinai, to have the blessing out of Zion; in a word, to have the full assurance of unchangeable love, and endless felicity, and that, in a little, all the enemies of his salvation, as they are now chained, so shall never vex him more, but he shall sing riches of grace, and the righteousnes of Jesus, world without end.

MEDITATION LI.

The noble principle.

Spithead, July 19, 1758.

Now I am distant from all my religious acquaintance and civilized friends, who might be a check upon me; and, what is worse, I am out of the church, therefore out of the reach of her discipline; but what is worst of all, I am where religion is a stranger, and is voted to have no interest on the element of water. Here it is social to be wicked, and profanity and impiety are supported at the expence of all that is sacred or valuable. Here shame is laid aside, brazen impudence is worn on every brow, and he that departs from iniquity becomes a prey to ridicule and scoff. Yet, for all this, how can I commit wickedness, and sin against God? Shall I not improve this opportunity, put into my hand, to witness for religion against all their vileness, and to strike a terror into the most abandoned; as there is no conscience that slumbers so securely, but there are now and then clamors rising within?

What thanks to me to be for God among his saints, where for very shame I dare not be against him? But surely it is commendable, when called in providence to be among those among whom satan has his seat, not only to abstain from the sins in which they revel, but to oppose, to reprove, to let my hatred of the vices which

they admire, be known, and not to drop my testimony against sin, though with sinners I prevail nothing; for though our diligence be not successful, our duty must not be slackened. The sinner mistakes the matter, for he thinks he has liberty to sin in one situation more than in another: but it mightily aggravates his wickedness, because he carries not the awe and belief of God's omnipresence every where. Were he at home, no man more civil than he. But the eye of man prevails more with him than the omniscience of God; for when he leaves his friends and native land, he leaves the fear of God also (that is, the form of godliness, for he never knew the power thereof) and rushes into sin wherever he goes. Like the ignorant Syrians, he thinks that God is a God of the hills, but not of the vallies, a God of the land but not of the sea; and thus, when he casts off men by distance, he sets God also at a distance, and the divine law at defiance: but, to his endless remorse, he shall know that God seeth, not only under the whole heaven, but through the whole heart; and filleth not only time, but eternity itself.

As no grateful soul could injure a generous friend though he could never know it; so, for my part, I would not sin against God, even supposing that he could not know it. How should I forget thy tender mercies, thy love, thy compassion, thy kindness, and supporting grace! How should I sin against thy holiness, offend my best, my never-failing friend, wound my conscience, slay my soul, and trample on thy glory! Thou art ever in the heart that loves thee, and thou wilt bring them that willingly forget thee to a remembrance of thy omnipresence by the down-pouring of thy dreadful wrath. If nothing but the eye of man be on the mind, it will make but small impression, and the impression will be quickly gone; but I can never hide me from Heaven, nor conceal myself from my own conscience.

Moreover I am bound to be for God by many ties. O how shall I honour him whom all dishonour, and appear for him when all appear against him! In the time that I may appear alone for him, I should not loose the opportunity which may never be put into my hand again. How then should I love him whom the sons of men refuse to love; and hate sin the more that men hate it so

little! Surely my zeal should be the warmer that men have lost all zeal for God and his glory. What can be more ungrateful than to sin against that God that has sent his Son to save me? than to offend him who defends me every day, than to cast off his fear, who has fed me all my life long; or join a multitude against him, who, passing by a multitude has chosen me? I should have an eye to his glory, and his love should be always before me; his greatness should fill my mind with holy awe, and his goodness with gratitude and joy. But, ah! worthless I, how shall I hold up my face when I fall so far short of my duty, and do so little for him, who has done so much, who has done every thing for me!

MEDITATION LII.

Comparisons.

July 20, 1758.

To make my situation more pleasant, in this meditation, let me run a comparison between the sea-life, and the Christian life, which is properly called a warfare.

1. Then, we embark all in one common cause; so have all Christians one interest.

2. We leave our own country, our friends, and our native land; so must every Christian, so must the church forget her father's house, and her own people.

3. Sometimes we enter into his majesty's service against the opinion and inclination of our nearest friends; so sometimes, in becoming disciples of Jesus, we must deny our nearest connections, and dearest friends.

4. We do not entangle ourselves with the affairs of the land, as we belong to the sea; so must the saint not entangle himself in the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a spiritual soldier.

5. We are all maintained by the King; so are all Christians by the throne of Heaven.

6. We come here neither uncalled nor unwelcome, however unfit; so none that come to Jesus, shall ever be cast out.

7. Some are impressed for the service of their king and

country; so nothing less than almighty power can make the sinner submit to Jesus.

8. We undergo a great change of life when we forsake the land and dwell on the ocean; but they share in a greater change, who are translated from darkness into light, from the power of satan, to the living God.

9. Our way of walking must be changed, else we shall have many a fall on the deck; so Christians must not walk as other men, else, they shall not keep the path of life.

10. Our food must be changed, and adapted to our way of life; so must Christians live as well as walk by faith, and feed on heavenly food.

11. Our provisions must be of such a nature as to keep long, free of putrefaction, and answer in every climate; so must the saint feed on Jesus, the bread of life, who can nourish in every condition below.

12. We must forego our easy life, and expect to be washed by the briny wave, and beaten by the storm; so Christians must not expect to loll in the lap of pleasure in a world where they are to have tribulation and pain.

13. We must keep continual watch fore and aft the ship, and the crew dare never all sleep at once; so must the Christian watch continually, watch unto all prayer, and be ever on his guard.

14. Our very dialect distingushes us from the inhabitants on land; so should the Christian be known from the men of the world, by his innocent, useful, edifying, and religious discourse, managed always with discretion.

15. We have a discipline peculiar to ourselves, and pretty severe; so has the Christian church from her Lord a government and discipline which none can alter or abrogate.

16. We must not expect to quit the tempestuous element till the war be finished, and peace proclaimed; so the Christian need not expect to be disengaged from trouble and turmoil till the spiritual war is ended, and eternal peace brought in.

17. We must always be ready to engage the enemy, as we know not when we may meet, and where we must fight; so the Christian, being in the midst of his enemies, must always be ready for the battle.

18. We are provided with arms and ammunition for the day of battle at the king's cost; so is every saint with the whole armour of God.

19. Sometimes an engagement at sea is made more dreadful by the darkness of the night; so sometimes in the darkness of desertion, the saint is surrounded with all his cruel foes.

20. We must fight before we get the victory; so must the Christian conquer ere he obtain the crown.

21. We are provided with men of the healing art to give assitance to the wounded and diseased; so have the saints a tender-hearted Physician, who binds up the broken heart, cures the painful wound, and pours in the healing balm.

22. We have a steward who gives us our provisions daily, and not all at once, yet we have no uneasiness, knowing there is plenty under his hand, and that he has orders not to let us starve; so the saints, either in respect of spiritual provision, or daily bread, need never be disquieted for futurity, since Jesus is appointed of the Father, a steward to all the children of God, since all the fulness of the Godhead is treasured up in him for their supply, and since, to their unspeakable profit, all their provision, of one or other kind, is not given to them at once, but kept in his hand.

23. We have persons among us of all nations, English, Scots, Irish, Dutch, Swedes, Danes, French, Spaniards, Germans, Swiss, Italians, Russians, Indians, &c. of all dispositions, of all employments, and of all ages; so the Catholic church is composed of all nations, people, and languages, and of young and old.

24. We are appareled in a different manner from the men on land; so Christians are covered, both with the justifying righteousness of Christ, and with the righteousness of saints.

25. Officers, men, boys, are allowed the same quantity of provisions in the same time; so the fullness of the covenant, the fatness of God's house, is alike free to all the members of Christ.

26. We have several officers here, without whom we could not be governed; so in the church, there are officers for the government of the whole body.

27. We are in the midst of dangers, and yet are pre-

served; so the church, like a lily among thorns, grows and is not choaked; is a bush burning, but not consumed; sometimes persecuted of men, but never forsaken of God.

28. In a voyage, or on a cruise, we are cut off from all the world, and have no communication with any; so the church and people of God shall dwell alone, not mingle with the people, nor be reckoned among the nations.

29. Every loss we sustain in an engagement is borne by government; but when we conquer, we divide the spoil, and share the prize-money among us; so God supports his people in their spiritual warfare, makes up every loss, enriches them with the spoils of their enemies, and at last puts palms in their hands, and crowns on their heads.

30. When the war is ended, and peace restored, we retire with all our acquisitions, to receive the congratulations of our friends, and enjoy ourselves in peace and tranquillity as long as we shall live; even so, at death we trample on our last enemy, quit the field with triumph, go to the blessed society of saints and angels, receive a crown of immortal glory, and are happy beyond expression, beyond conception, in the enjoyment of God and the Lamb for evermore.

MEDITATION LIII.

Our sorrow for sin too contracted.

July 22, 1758.

Now to my grief I am among sinners; and it corrodes my spirits that they with whom I am concerned in one vessel and in one interest should so sin against God. Though there were no wickedness committed in this ship, yet how does it prevail through the whole British fleets with which I am connected; but though I were out of the navy, yet I am still concerned with Britain; or though out of Britain, I am still in the world, and therefore concerned with the whole inhabitants thereof. Now I see my sorrow for sin is not so universal as it ought to be;

for while I lament great sins, gross abominations, and detestable crimes, I am apt to overlook mental corruptions, and natural depravity, which is the spring of all. Again, it is too contracted, in that I confine my grief to the wretches that are daily in my view; for though the crew here were all saints, yet how, through the whole fleet, have officers and men all corrupted their way! or though the whole fleet were innocent, yet how through Britain, by her armies and men of all ranks, is the divine law broken with impunity! But though Britain were as righteous as Israel in their purest times, yet what wickedness against the majesty of Heaven is committed through the world abroad!

O contracted sorrow! to grieve for nothing but what I see; as if the glory of God were not alike dear to him in all places; or as if he were not offended at sin on every shore, in every land, and in every heart! Though what I see and hear deserves my first tears, yet I should continue the flood, because iniquity overflows the universe, because the whole world lies in iniquity, and the earth groaneth under the inhabitants thereof. Though the enemies of God may not be always in my sight as now some of them are, yet they are always in the sight of Heaven; sinning against him who is every where present: my sorrow therefore should continually be before me, and the shame of my face ever cover me; and my unremitting request should be, and shall be, that the knowledge of the Lord may fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

MEDITATION LIV.

Prsioners.

St. Helen's, July 29, 1758.

This is a common affliction in war, that whoever conquer at last, in the mean time many on both sides loose their life or suffer by imprisonment, as these poor men, who carry the effects of their long confinement, and short allowance, in their countenance. Their meagre looks tell they have not been upon the bounty of their own sovereign, under whose colours they fought. But now,

when again possessed of liberty, they betake not themselves to a slothful, indolent, and easy life, but, with redoubled ardour, fly again to arms, eager to be revenged on their enemies, and take them prisoners, whose prisoners they were. Even so the soldier, that in the Christian warfare (and all his life is one campaign) is taken captive by satan, is cast down by some temptation, and overcome by some lust; who is imprisoned in carnality, whose iron gate is deadness, and its brazen bolt despair, and the chains and fetters which bind the prisoners are insensibility, and impenitence of heart; while satan, to keep all secure, stands sentry himself; even so, when such an one is recovered from his deadness, is restored to liberty, by him who takes the prey from the terrible, and delivers the lawful captive, how does his holy indignation rise against sin, and that sin especially which had overcome him! As he had gone backward, now he runs in the way of righteousness, and studies that his path may be like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. None has a greater hatred of sin than he, a greater zeal for the glory of God, a greater jealousy over himself, and greater compassion for those that groan under the assaults of satan, and swellings of sin. His jail disease (a death on the whole soul) is removed, and being fed and feasted with the bread of life, he grows strong as David, for the war, as an angel of God. Not a wound of all those which he received when taken captive, but is healed by the balm of Gilead which is poured in by the Physician of souls. And he is filled with joy by the sweet assurance, that none of all the armies of God shall die in prison, but with full triumph, and loud hosannah, shall at last enter the realms of everlasting day.

MEDITATION LV.

A ship falling foul of another.

Under sail from Cherbourg.

How sweet is life for which a man will quit with his all! When these two ships, which mine anxious eyes beheld, fell foul of one another, from the lesser vessel which

seemed in greatest danger, how did every one fly, and never look behind! One comes out half naked, but finds no cold; another, in getting into the other ship, catches a bruise or a wound, but feels no pain till afterwards. I see, then, that man needs no admonition to preserve his temporal life, or avoid bodily danger; but how do they sleep on in sin till awaked in everlasting agonies!

"Fly from the wrath to come," is the divine admonition to all; but a raging sea, and a roaring tempest, a sinking vessel, and a swelling wave, are more prevalent with men to attempt their escape, than all the terrors of the Lord, the prospect of future wrath and eternal torment. But some may be discouraged to essay reformation, or begin to amend, because they have so long followed the ways of sin; yet this, instead of deterring them from, should determine them to make their last efforts to escape. Tell the affrighted crew, that because they are in danger, they must dwell in danger sedately, and let themselves drown without disturbance, since it seems to be their fate. Such an advice would seem the language of a madman, an advice they never will accept of. They will make the more haste the greater their danger, and the greater speed to deliver themselves the nearer they seem to destruction; yea, they will attempt to make their escape, though they should perish in the attempt. They will rather be in motion, than sit still and perish. O that men, the worst of men, would follow their example! for if they abide in their sins they perish, and though they misgive in their attempts to escape (but when does this happen?) they can but perish.

Again, a man fast asleep could not have been concerned in all the confusion these men were in, but should have sunk like a stone in the mighty waters. But all that are awake see their danger, and endeavour to accomplish their escape. So those that are in a natural state are spiritually asleep, and see no danger till they plunge into the flames of hell: but the soul that is awake to eternity, sees his danger, and flies from the wrath to come; and there is as great difference between a man in a renewed and unrenewed state, as between a man fast asleep and broad awake.

Moreover, we see that these men minded nothing but life, left all behind them, even their most precious things,

and made their escape. So, when a soul seeks to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, he counts all things but loss and dung, even the things he had counted gain before, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He sets his eye on the unseen world, and secures his interest there. Looking on the present world as a shattered vessel that cannot long carry him safe, but must sink him at last, he sees that it is his highest wisdom to get out of the leaky vessel, into the safe ark of the covenant, that still keeps above the swelling floods. And finally, he sets his affections on heavenly things, and anticipates a little of that joy and serenity which shall take place in the world to come, when storms and tempests cease.

MEDITATION LVI.

War.

Under sail, August 18, 1758.

How often have we cause to cry out of the cruelty of men! Mankind, allied to one another by blood, and human reason, yet have more cunning to destroy each other than all the beasts of the forest. No sooner were these poor innocents as to personal prejudice (who never met before, and only meet now that they may meet no more) within the reach of mutual destruction, but they fall to work, and deprive each other of their life, and hands unknown send souls into the world unseen. Cannon roar like the destructive thunders, and all the instruments of war are set a sounding terror and dismay. Pity, that character of Heaven, knows no egress from the human breast, till the enemy are cut off, or yield prisoners to the victor. How many souls, by the unsheathed and naked sword, are sent naked into the world of spirits! Unprepared for their last moments, they have not a quiet moment at last to prepare for death, but are hurried into their last, unalterable state at once, with a few melting groans. What a piteous sight is the field of battle! The very ground is plowed with the irresistible cannon-balls; or if the battle borders on a wood, the trees are

barked with continual firing, and the neighbouring hills echo with the noise, the confused noise of war, while the shriekings and groanings of the deadly wounded add to the horrors of the day. Such are the contests of courts, such the ambition of kings, who purchase *elbow-room* to their sceptres, at the expence of their subjects lives.

But if the war of mortals be so terrible to one another, what must that day be when God shall rise up to the prey, to rid him of his enemies, and ease him of his adversaries? when his angry countenance shall kindle the heavens above, and set the earth on fire beneath? when the thunders of his right hand shall fill hell with universal trembling; and his flaming throne that is rolled on wheels of fire, and whence a fiery stream issues, shall affrighten the human race, being summoned to make their last appearance before the judgment-seat? No pity, no compassion then, no mercy, no forgiveness there! If men are cut off by the weapons of war, in the hand of frail mortals how must they perish under the stroke of Omnipotence, which shall reach to the soul in all her powers? when his almighty hand takes hold of, and whets the glittering sword, and swears he lives for ever, to punish his enemies for ever?

O that men were wise, and would consider their latter end; would throw down the weapons of their rebellion, and fight under the Captain of salvation! then should they be happy in war and in peace; in this, and in the world to come.

MEDITATION LVII.

*Unfortunate Retreat.**

St. Cas, Sept. 12, 1758.

Ah, mournful day! what moving sights, what melting sounds have I seen and heard by sea and land this day!

* Our forces having made a decent on the coast of France, the enemy assembled their forces, before whom our little army retreated, to re-embark, but when the greater part was carried aboard the transports by the flat bottomed boats, the enemy came down, and killed and made prisoners, about 1400. The action lasted about two hours, the frigates and bomb-ketches assisted the land forces also.

My heart bleeds for the sons of war, who boldly shed their blood. For though their scanty number was overpowered by the enemy, who poured in fresh supplies, yet their courage was conspicuous to the last. Ah, doleful event of one fatal day! Many, gay and cheerful in the morning, lay gasping at noon, and are clay-cold by the evening twilight! My heart-strings are pierced with pain, while I remember the anguish of their last moments: they fall, but none to lift them up; they groan, but no kindly sympathiser; they die, and there is no tender-hearted mourner, none to deplore them. The little army is broken by superior numbers. and take to flight; but whither can they fly? A victorious enemy is before, rocks on every side, and a raging sea behind; some even adventure into the water, and are shot while wading for life, or perish in the waves!

How vain the confidence of man! how empty the boast of invincible courage! Let men remember that God gives the victory, and that at his frown heroes fall, and armies fly.

Methinks I see the yet more awful, universal, and conclusive day, when the heavens shall open in tremendous thunders, when the dreadful trumpet, with louder sounds than ever echoed from the martial plains, shall raise the sleeping dust, and the tremendous Judge descend in flaming vengeance on his fiery throne; before whom the nations shall be assembled, and by whom the final sentence passed. This is the decision that shall concern the victors and the vanquished: The survivors and the slain; sovereigns and their subjects; yea, the whole world and me.

MEDITATION LVIII.

The natural man insensible of mercy.

Portsmouth Harbour, November 1, 1758.

Did men look but a little towards God, and into themselves, it would be their wisdom; but true wisdom can never shine where saving grace does not dwell. There are some men saved from dangers, the relation of which

must astonish. They are standing monuments of singular mercy, when numbers were dropping down around them, when instruments of death were rattling thick about them, like the hail from the thunder-cloud, and bullets falling like drops of rain, and yet they preserved safe among the gasping crowd. And there are others who have still a more narrow escape, while the bullet breaks a bone to them, which might have cut the thread of their life; wounds an extremity, which might have pierced the heart and dislodged the soul. For a month or six weeks they have a kindly remembrance of their singular preservation and heaven's peculiar mercy. But, O chilling thought! how soon do these very persons forget their great deliverer, shew not the least gratitude to God, but return to sin, and proceed from evil to worse! Had any person been a mean of their preservation, they had displayed so much of the gentleman as never to forget it: but it was God and they display so much of the sinner, the abandoned sinner, as never to remember it, never to acknowledge it! They pursue their sinful practices, as if their life had at first been given, and preserved when in danger, for no other purpose. These men are the enemies of God; they have been hungry and he has given them bread to eat; they have been thirsty and he has given them water to drink; they have been in disease, and he has recovered them; in danger, and he has preserved them; therefore, if they continue still his enemies, he will heap coals of fire on their head, while his kindness shall be renowned for ever. Where mercies have no effect, judgments shall without fail have most terrible effect at last. Since I am a child of many mercies, may gratitude write them, in indelible characters, on the table of my heart!

MEDITATION LIX.

The word of God irresistible.

Nov. 3, 1758.

O HOW glorious and irresistible is the word of grace when it comes accompanied with divine power! a word that turns a sinner from his wickedness to God. Fire

and sword cannot convert; war and shipwreck cannot reclaim; dangers and deliverance cannot reform; mercies and judgments cannot change the man; but one verse in the holy scriptures, a sentence or paragraph in a religious treatise, or an expression in a sermon backed with the divine blessing, and sent home by the Spirit of God, can prick to the very heart, overpower the whole soul, and open his eyes towards God, himself, and eternity; towards God, to see his holiness and indignation against sin; towards himself, to see his desperate and deplorable state in such a gulph of impurity and raging enmity against God; towards eternity, to see his vast concerns and interests there, and that they are of another kind than he dreamed of. Once he thought of nothing but assemblies, balls, and the theatre; of revellings and parties of pleasure; of knowing and being known; of posts, preferment, and commissions from his prince; of grand appearance, noble equipage, splendid retinue, and high-sounding titles. But now he sees that judgment awaits all his actions, eternity treads on the heels of time, and that there is a world to come. These things cast out the vain and trifling phantoms that engrossed all his attention before, and give him just and proper ideas of every thing around. And this great and wonderful change, which makes him account every thing loss, dung and dross, in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and the unseen world, is effected by a very word, that the excellency of the power may be seen to be of God; while others hear thousands of such words, and continue in impenitency.

Though a man were thrown into hell, and saw and suffered all the torments of the damned, for years and ages, and brought up again to the land of the living, to the place of hope, yet all would be to no purpose, for without the blessing of the Most High, on the means of grace, he would not accept of salvation, nor receive the Saviour by believing on his name; and this is evident in those who have a foretaste of the terrors of hell, by the horrors of an awakened conscience, which, instead of bringing them nearer to, drives them farther from God, and plunges them into the tremendous deeps of despair.

Though the words of peace may be more glorious from mount Zion to those that have heard the threatenings of

mount Sinai, and though the thunderings of the law may precede to prepare his way; yet still God comes to a soul in the still small voice of the gospel. Then happy they that know the joyful sound, for faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. By what experience shall they support their plea, who are for *free will*, and a kind of *self-agency*, in the work of conversion, when we see thousands and ten thousands perish, although it is natural for all men to wish to be happy! The *Armenian* will say, because they will not, therefore they are not happy; but says the scripture, "No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." Now, whether I am to believe the Armenian or God, let all the world judge.

MEDITATION LX.

Docking Ships.

Nov. 4, 1758.

It is requisite at certain times to bring ships into the dock, that they may be cleaned, caulked, and fitted out for sea again. This is indeed attended with trouble, as guns, carriages, shot, stores, provisions, and ballast, must be taken out, that the ship may easily be got into dock, and a proper inspection made into those places that need repair; and that stores, provisions, and every thing needful, may be completed for a cruise or a voyage.

Then how much more necessity have Christians, who steer on a more tempestuous sea than the watery element, to inspect and try themselves! For such serious and solemn work, they should set a day apart for prayer and examination; when, that they may know their situation, they should look into their heart and inclination, their life and conversation, their thoughts, the ends and motives of all their actions. Assisted by the light of revelation, they should see, and comparing themselves with the rule of the word, they should understand what is wrong, what is wanting, what is decayed, and what is defective. They ought to search into the state of their soul, and the condition of their graces; and also see what

sins have been most predominant in them. Surely those who are cast into wicked company, and are daily hearing and seeing sin, have much to mourn over; for such an exercise is highly requisite in all the candidates for glory. They are also, from the royal magazine of grace, which, for the saints, is treasured up in the Son of God, to take in provisions of every kind, and all sorts of warlike stores, such as the sword of the Spirit, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the anchor of hope, and the compass of truth; as they must steer over roaring oceans, struggle through storms and tempests, and fight their passage all along through foes, and thus, spiritually refitted, proceed in their voyage to Immanuel's land.

MEDITATION LXI.

On going into harbour.

Nov. 5, 1758.

One should think that when the tempests and the dangers of the sea are over, all were safe; and that in sight of land we should laugh at shipwreck; yet the loss of nations, and the experience of thousands, attest, that on coasts more ships are lost than at sea; and so the Government has prudently appointed pilots to bring in his Majesty's ships, that they may be in no danger in coming into harbour.

Now, what may this remind us of, but that the saints, and such as look for an happy anchoring in the port of bliss, should be very careful how they steer the last part of their long and momentous voyage; how they enter the harbour of death, where their ship is to be laid up, not for a winter, but for ever. They are to beware that they do not stick on the sands of carnal security; or run into the shallow waters of lukewarm indifferency; or be blown on the rocks of false confidence, by the high winds of spiritual delusion. A mistake here may occasion damage, but, though it cost expences, may be mended; but among men, a mistake at death is fatal, and of the last consequence, because it can never be mended afterwards. Again, the tide is a mighty assistant in our getting into

harbour here; but to dying mortals, the Jordan of death is a terrible river, which overflows all its banks; and it is the fear of dissolution that keeps some all their lifetime subject to bondage; yea, and by this current, thousands and ten thousands are hurried into the horrid pit of perdition. But in a surprising manner the saints go over dry shod; for the High Priest, who bears the ark of the everlasting covenant, and all the rich grace and precious promises that it contains, having that river to wade through which runneth in the way of all living, once did so, with the soles of his feet, when he was found in fashion as a man, and humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, so that it remains still *cut in two* to the saints, even while it overflows all its banks to the wicked.

The more we advance into the harbour, we are the more out of danger from the storms and tempests that sweep along the ruffled ocean. But it is otherwise with the dying saint; satan does all he can to cloud his evidences, to deaden his faith, to blacken his infirmities, to make him doubt his own condition, to nickname his graces, to slay his confidence, to draw him from Christ, and drive him into despair, anxious to make a wreck of him even in sight of Immanuel's shore: yet all the powers of hell shall never pluck the least of Christ's little ones out of his hand. But how watchful should we be, and how careful to prepare for these critical moments! for we are like a ship that has traded for a long time in the East-Indies, and comes home with all her treasures; so our all, our everlasting all, is lost if we founder at our last. However, our safety lies in this alone, that *he* whose presence calms the raging sea, and rending winds, shall be our pilot to the harbour of the better country, to the port of glory.

MEDITATION LXII.

On taking in large provisions.

Portland Roads, Dec. 15, 1758.

SURELY the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light; for at land every man provides what he can against winter; and at sea we take in large stores of all things, when we are to make a long voyage. Now, my soul, what hast thou laid up for eternity? This awful, this interesting voyage, thou must make: it is already begun, and thou shalt never tread on the earth again, never more return to time after death; and if thou carriest not something with thee, thou must suffer irreparable loss for ever, as there is no oil to be bought (this the foolish virgins shall find) in the other world; no grace to be found, nor pardon to be expected (this all impenitent sinners shall experience) on the other side of the grave. Death cuts down the tree as it stands, which falls as it grows, and as it falls must lie for ever. Why then, O blinded Papists! prayers and masses for the dead? To as good purpose apply medicines to dead bodies to bring them to life again, as use prayers for departed souls to bring them to salvation. It is now that we must improve for eternity, where our vast and highest concerns lie.

If this ship should go out to cruise for three months in the main ocean without bread or beer, wood or water, or any other provisions, would not all concerned in her be chargeable with consummate folly, as the whole crew must inevitably perish with hunger? but of greater madness am I possessed, if my soul go out into the boundless ocean of eternity without an interest in Christ, who is the tree of life that feeds the higher house, and river of life that waters all the paradise of God.

According to the length of our voyage must be the quantity of provisions taken aboard; and indeed nothing less than a whole God, in all his fulness and perfections, an all-sufficient Saviour, in all his offices and relations, and the Holy Ghost, in all his divine influences and con-

solations, can be a proper provision for my soul through a whole eternity.

MEDITATION LXIII.

Comfort and terror in one consideration.

Portland Roads, Dec. 19, 1758.

When the affairs of war, and protection of our trade, call for a change of climates, and hurry us from the chilling North to the burning South, it may afford comfort to the pious soul to reflect, that the God on whom he built his hopes *here*, is also *there*, to answer all the expectations of his faith. But it may strike terror into the profligate wretch, to think that the God against whom he sinned *here*, is also *there* to punish his iniquity. Then I see that the omnipresence of God may be a *panacea*, an universal cure, to the anxiety of my soul every where: for God may call his own people from their own home, their friends, their country, but he will never cast them from his protection, his presence, himself. Then, though I leave my friends and acquaintance, and go to the remotest Indies, or most distant parts of the world, still the same God that here manifests himself so gracious and so kind, is the same God that governs under the whole heaven, and there can manifest himself in his wonted tender mercy, and former loving-kindness. Whither can I go from him who is every where? this is my comfort. And whither wilt thou, O sinner! fly from him who is every where? let this be thy terror. For the God that dwells between the cherubims of a gospel-dispensation, sits also on the floods; and he that rules in Jacob, rules also unto the ends of the earth. Moreover, when I leave this world to go into the world unknown, then the same God (for he inhabits eternity, who measures the moments of my time) whom I served here, shall receive me there. This is the excellency of the Christian religion, that we, as it were, begin eternity in time, and join in our adorations with the sons of day, with the hosts of heaven. Deluded nations of old trusted in gods, that could not go, but must needs be borne by their demented votaries; but the

true God, who is an everlasting King, has been the God of his chosen people in all places of the world, and in all ages, yea, before the world began; hence says Moses, "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations, before thou hadst brought forth the mountains:" and when time is gone, and ages finished, he will be their dwelling-place, who is from everlasting to everlasting God. Then happy I, if I have an abiding relation, and sure interest in him who is every where present, as to his essence; and inhabits eternity, as to his duration. Time past and to come only respects us, for with God it ever was, is, and will be one eternal *now*.

Every way I look there is safety: Dwell I at home, he is there; go I abroad, he is there; live I in this world, he holds it in his hand, and sees under the whole heaven; die I, and go out of the world, he is there filling all, and in all. Now, O sinner! stand still, and see thy misery. Thou sinnest against God, and how shalt thou escape? thou mayest injure a fellow creature, and by going into some distant part of the world, elude law, and laugh at justice; and if thou diest, thou art out of the reach of the pursuer here to all intents and purposes; but go where thou wilt, thou art still in his power, still in his presence, whom thou hast offended. Then mind, that he whom thou hast made thine enemy all thy life long, will at last be thy judge and supreme tormentor, whose breath shall kindle the burning stream. Sinners and saints may have common comforts, and common crosses, but one thought on eternity spreads horror through the soul of the one, while it diffuses consolation in the breast of the other.

MEDITATION LXIV.

On being in hot climates in a few days.

Under sail for Gibraltar, Feb. 2, 1759.

How few days sailing from the temperate zone, can chill us in the freezing north, or scorch us in the burning south! Of the last we had experience, while inclement winter receded from the plowing keel, and smiling summer approached the expanded sail! This short and sudden

change suggests an interesting thought to my mind; that at the hour of death, in a shorter time than this, the soul shall either be placed in that degree of distance from God where eternal winter blows terrible, with all the angry storms and tempests of vindictive wrath; or (may I use the expression?) under the very *line* of union and communion with the Most High, where the Sun of righteousness shall shine from his cloudless meridian, and pour down assimilating glory in every beam. This stupendous thought I cannot, I dare not pursue, but, falling off in silence, give way to deep meditation.

MEDITATION LXV.

An high wind preferable to a calm.

Under sail, Feb. 15, 1759.

Among the wonders of navigation, this is one, that through opposing waves which dash on every side, and amidst winds so strong that they seem rather a tempest than a moderate gale, the ship should pursue her voyage with more expedition, and reach her port sooner, than in a profound calm. Indeed he that never had his foot on salt water before, and adventures only on the glassy surface to take his pleasure, will bless the serenity, and congratulate the calm; but the spirited sailor who minds his business, and has other climes in view, will rather wish a brisk gale to waft him to the distant shore, than to roll about in a dead calm till his vessel be eaten with worms, or grow rotten in the water and perish.

Even so, Christian, it fares with thee. Believe it, the best weather does not make the best voyage heavenward. It is better for thee to proceed on thy course through the rolling waves of affliction, attended by the ruffling winds of adversity, than to be becalmed by affluence, ease, and prosperity. The one, through seeming difficulty and threatened danger, shall at last let thee arrive at thy desired haven, while the other detains thee to thy eternal ruin. God, that sits as king on the swelling flood, rules also all the afflictions of his people. Though sometimes they complain, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone

over me," yet not one can attack them, but by his permission, nor swell beyond the given bounds. Covenant-mercy has established the kind decree, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy perplexing waves be stayed." Why then should the Christian mariner on the flood of time, cry out so against the boisterous wind, afflictive wave, and foaming billow, which hasten the out-bound sail to the pacific shore? Have not some, by the thorny cross, been startled out of their delusive dreams, and awakened to the concerns of a world to come? by the loss of a child, found the Son of God? and by the death of an earthly father, been brought into subjection to the Father of spirits, and so made to live? And have not some, while unjustly deprived of a small part, and petty inheritance in this world, been made to look out for an inheritance in the better country, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? To say no more, will not the experience of the saints agree in this, that he knows their souls in adversity; and that while their outward man seemeth to decay through the lashes of daily affliction, their inward man is renewed day by day, so that in the year of drought their soul is as a watered garden?

MEDITATION LXVI.

On sailing near different nations.

Feb. 20, 1759.

THERE is a great pleasure in sailing to different parts of the world, to see the divine wisdom, and profuse bounty every where displayed, of him that made the whole; but there is a great pain in this, that wherever we go, we see the terrible devastation of sin. If we look to one shore, there superstition reign; if to another, there cruelty rages. These pretend to be Christians, those avow themselves Musselmen, while a third are mere infidels. All worship some God, but how few the true God, how very few, the true God in truth! O, then, that God would have respect to his covenant, because the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of horrid cru-

elty! When shall the darkness that covers the nations, the gross darkness that covers the people, be dispelled by the light of the glorious gospel of the Son of God? When shall Jehovah, as his special and spiritual inheritance, take all nations? Shall satan continue to take kingdoms captive at his will? Shall the destroyer of the Gentiles ruin precious souls without number? Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations? Let not the curse devour the earth, and them that dwell thereon. When shall the name of Jew and Gentile be lost in that of Christian, and Christians become the true worshippers of the Father, the followers of the Lamb? When shall that reviving acclamation charm the ears of all the expectants, of the sacred conquest, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever?" Hasten the time when the Lord of universal nature shall bestow this general benediction, saying, Blessed be Asia and Africa, my people, America, the work of mine hands, and Europe, with her Isles, mine inheritance.

MEDITATION LXVII.

On reaching a port after being long at sea.

Gibraltar Bay, Feb. 21, 1759.

Now we have reached the desired haven when patience was almost worn out, and we had been long sported with by the unfavourable gale. Among the baffling winds we spent at least thrice the time that might have brought us hither; but now, when safely moored, the dark reflections fly, and the disagreeableness of our passage decreases, through joy that we are come so safe to an anchor: the very difficulties that overtook us on the ocean make our coming to harbour afford us greater pleasure, than if a favourable wind in a few days had wafted us hither.

Even so, when the saints of God reach the happy shore, it shall, as it were, heighten the joys of the higher house, that they dwelt in the house of mourning; soften

their rest, that they were tossed on a stormy ocean; brighten the heavenly vision, that they have seen scenes of affliction; swell their delight and complacency, that their life was full of disappointment and pain; and sweeten these rivers of pleasures, that they have drank the waters of *Mara*. Here the troubled sailor in a storm is afraid of shipwreck every moment; but the saint may be assured, (why then, O saints! so much doubting?) that he shall safely arrive at Immanuel's coast, in spite of all the storms that attack, and tempests that attend him by the way. Courage, then, my soul, and weather out the squalls, and endure the bitterest blasts that can blow against thee, triumphing in this one consideration, that eternal veracity is engaged for thy security. The storms that now beset thee are but transient, and also bounded; but the rest and peace, the felicity and joys, that are reserved for thee, are eternal, immense, and passing all understanding.

MEDITATION LXVIII.

On a man that died by liquor.

Under sail, Mediterranean, March 6, 1759.

In how many things is it possible for man to transgress? Not a blessing but he can turn into a curse; not a mercy but he can suck misery from it, and, by excess, the means of life become the occasion of death. How sad an use make we of the creature, when it renders us incapable of serving our Creator; which is the case, not only with the drunkard and glutton, but with the carnal-minded man, who surfeits on the cares and riches of this world!

This demented wretch, this poor fellow-creature, tried his strength to his own destruction, and was a more cruel suicide or self-murderer, than if he had given himself a mortal wound; for then he might have died awake, and with the exercise of his reason; but now he undergoes the last, the most tremendous change asleep, and totally deprived of the use of reason! He drank till he dropped down in a dead sleep, out of which it was impossible to awake him (for death was in it) till plunged into the

world of spirits. But how terrible to die in such a condition! If any dreams, reflection, or remembrance of former things, could penetrate his profound slumber, his deep sleep, he would believe himself to be still among his companions, drinking the other glass, and quaffing it out merrily among his mess-mates. But O how inconceivably astonished, and terribly surprised, to find himself disembodied, and in his sober wits, pannelled before the awful tribunal, and hear the final sentence passed! Fain would he recoil into the body which he lately left, but the union is dissolved, the tie is broken, and he is thenceforth an inhabitant in the world of spirits! Perhaps he dreamed, while the fiery spirits were burning up his vitals, that he was drinking at some cooling stream; but how disappointed to find his first draught the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God, poured out without the least mixture of mercy! The last words he spoke were oaths, but how would it strike with terror to hear the belching of consummate despair! While he felt himself at once surrounded with the howlings of Tophet, the blasphemies of the damned, and all the groans and yellings of the burning pit, what tongue can tell, what heart conceive what he must feel?

Indeed the thoughtless rabble seemed somewhat amazed at this uncommon death; but how superficial is their concern while they continue the very same excesses which proved fatal to their fellow-creature! But however much amazed man may be at this manner of the soul's going out of the body into eternity, in such a doleful case, in such a melancholy condition, the whole graceless world die; for though they can talk to men, and have their eye, their ear, their tongue, in a word, the use of all their senses, and the exercise of their reason to the last, yet their souls, with respect to spiritual things, and communion with God, are as fast asleep, as deadly and deeply intoxicated with the juice of the vine of Sodom, even the draughts of sin and pleasure, as this poor man that died with too much liquor; and shall be equally astonished, terrified, tormented, when awaked in the world of spirits.

MEDITATION LXIX.

The Earth a Globe.

Under sail, Mediterranean, March 13, 1759.

WHEREVER I sail, the earth is still beneath my feet, and the heaven is still above my head; which shows the madness of man's desire, that has no limits, when its object is every where circumscribed. It is not for a kingdom exalted above the hills, that the contending nations now are at war; it is but for a footbreadth of dust, a province, an island, or a frontier town, that tribes are slaughtered, and nations are undone. Were there nothing better than this earth, no wonder if we sought to extend our possession in the earth. It would be excusable for avarice to seek to the ends of the world, if there the golden mountains arched above our heads with all their sparkling veins; but still this idol of mankind lies buried in ore, and deep in the bowels of the earth, that it may not affect our ambitious eye; and still the heavens bend above us, to attract the soaring principle essential to the human soul. But as man despises what he should esteem, and doats on what he should abhor, seeking the creature more than the Creator, who is himself blessed for ever, and makes all that seek him blessed; God, in a way of judgment "has set the world in the hearts of the sons of men." Hence their whole chase, study, and endeavour, is for the world, which, though in great abundance obtained, cannot satisfy us; yet, believing that an addition to what we already have, will afford that satisfaction which we are conscious we want, our chase is perpetuated, and we are still disappointed. But how poor an heart-full have we who embrace our sepulchre, and hug our very tomb! For we must shortly lie buried among the mould we so much admire, and rot in the grosser particles of dust which we so regard. What is empire to an immortal soul? What the enjoyment of the universe for a few years, to one whose existence must measure with endless ever more? Then, as the earth is under my feet, and the heavens above my head, wherever I wander, let my affections trample this with just disdain; but my soul, on the wings of holy desire, soar to the regions of eternal day!

MEDITATION LXX.

On ships mistaking one another.

Mediterranean, March 14, 1759.

How often on the ocean do we prepare to fight a friend! Wherever we see a strange sail that belongs not to our fleet or squadron, we look upon her as an enemy, and so give chase, bring to, and speak with her. When we learn that she is out on the same errand, to distress the common foe, and by the same authority, at last our preparation for an engagement issues in an agreeable beguile. But at other times we are still more unhappy, while in the dark night, and not attending to, or understanding each other's signals, we think we have found our enemy, and so fire upon one another. When the morning light, or some other means, undeceive us, we feel in the most exquisite manner for our mistake; though his majesty has made provision for the friends of the unhappy sufferers if they die, or the sufferers themselves if rendered lame, by engaging one another through mistake.

Even so is the case often among the saints and churches of God. Contests come between the best of men, and sometimes about the smallest matters. Paul and Barnabas are so hot about their companion, that they part company; and to this day the teachers of the good knowledge of God can fall out about a word, though they own one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and subscribe one creed. Then, from these differences, we apprehend one another to be enemies; and, giving ground to our apprehensions, we begin to treat each other as enemies to the truth, and to the King of Zion, to the injury of the common cause of religion, and the hurt of the loyal subjects of Heaven.

Such indeed are the trials of the saints and church in their militant state, such are the calamities that are contingent to her in these days of darkness, and on this sea of trouble; but when they come to speak mouth to mouth, and to see eye to eye in the light of glory, they shall be all one. We should indeed contend for the truth with a zeal and concern due to its divinity, but with a tender-

ness and sympathy which our present imperfection pleads for. We should love the truth dearly, but yet rather pity than despise those that depart from some points which we count truth. We should not sell the truth to buy friends, to make a party, or gain numbers to our side; but we should forego our own humors, that the truth by us get not a wound. We had sometimes better employ our time in prayer to God, to turn them from the error of their way, than show our parts and our spleen, in proving them to be *wittingly* blind, and to have *wilfully* erred. We should do all things, except wound the truth, to make all men one in the truth; and when differences are done away, personal affronts should never stand in the way of reconciliation. How deplorable would it be if my hands, instead of being a mutual help, should scratch and tear one another; if my feet, instead of bearing me out the way, should stand still to kick at one another! So, and much worse is it for saints, who are the spiritual members of Christ, the living head, to bite and devour one another; but this is owing to the remains of corruption in them; and perfect peace is reserved for the state of highest perfection.

Now, as it is only at sea, and under the gloom of night that we are like to make mistakes, for when we come into harbour, and enjoy the noon-day beam, we have no doubt of one another, but know that we are all the subjects of one King, engaged in one cause, and combined against the common enemy; so it is only in this vale of tears, this day of thick darkness, that we cannot understand one another, but are ready, like the officious disciples, to forbid them that follow not with us in all things, though they be the servants of Christ. But when the warfare is finished, and the saints assembled before the throne of God and the Lamb, all wrong views, jarring opinions, discordance and difference, shall be done away for ever; in view of which eternal tranquillity we must comfort ourselves under the disagreeable occurrences of this troublesome life, where we not only must fight with foes, but fall out with dearest friends, and differ with our ownselves.

MEDITATION LXXI.

What we ought to remember.

Leghorn, April 5, 1759.

As we can never be from under the eye of God, nor would choose to be cast out of his care; so Zion should never be out of our mind, nor cast out of our concern. Besides, as we still think ourselves branches of the family to which we belong, and are glad to hear from our parents and relations of their welfare, however distant from them; so if we are members of mystical Zion, we will rejoice in her prosperity, and flourishing condition, though we be in the utmost parts of the earth. Surely, then, if I remember the Lord afar off, as I ought, Jerusalem will also come into my mind.

"How, then, have matters stood with Zion, in the land of my nativity? What success has the glorious gospel had? how have the flocks been fed? how have people profited in the day of their merciful visitation? how has vice been suppressed, and religion prevailed? how has truth been defended, and error exposed? how have the oppressed been relieved, and the heritage of God watered? what sons and daughters have been born in Zion? and are the true worshippers of the Father increased?" These things, amidst all my other concerns, should go nearest my heart, and the interests of Christ's kingdom should be my first concern, wherever my habitation for a time may be, hoping he will bring me again, and shew me both himself and his habitation. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

MEDITATION LXXII.

The patience of God very great.

Leghorn, April 6, 1759.

Truly it astonishes me that God spares those abandoned wretches, who day by day grow more wicked, and set their blaspheming tongues against the very heavens, and multiply rebellion against God. Truly it suprises me, that that vengeance which they so often invoke, is not poured down on them; that that power which they so often dare, does not destroy them! but God will manifest himself to be God by his adorable patience, as well as by his terrible justice. Let me suppose that the subjects of a certain great king rise up in rebellion against him, but by his superior power are routed, reduced, and all made prisoners; that royal clemency makes out a pardon for many, who are so sensible of the unmerited favour, that they throw away the weapons of their rebellion, and ever after live the most obedient, loyal, and affectionate subjects that can be; but that others are apprehended, tried, condemned, and cast into prison, till the day they are to be brought forth and broken on the wheel; that in the mean time the stubborn wretches keep railing and abusing the prince, and spewing out their malice to every one that passes by, till it reaches the royal ear; yet that it could not so incense the king as to cause him to send and tear the rebels limb from limb an hour before the set time. Even so deals God with sinners; he exercises amazing forbearance, not willing that any should perish, but at last he will punish awfully, and suffer no sinner to escape.

Do I, then, envy them their few peaceful years? or would I, like the disciples of old, fetch down consuming flames from heaven to burn them up, before he come in flaming fire to take vengeance on his enemies? No; let mercy reign her time; for with respect to the wicked, mercy shall soon quit the throne to inexorable justice, and then their misery shall be past expression and their overflowing anguish shall exceed the fountain of their tears.

MEDITATION LXXIII.

Delusion.

Leghorn, April 9, 1759.

Among all the various kinds of delusion, that which concerns the soul, religion, and God, is most melancholy, and has the most dismal effects. Some, because born in a religious family, account themselves Christians from their cradle, and give themselves no concern about the new birth. Others think all is well with them, because they are neither swearers nor liars, drunkards nor fornicators; they are just between man and man, have a form of godliness, and hence think themselves in a fair way for heaven, though ignorant of spiritual union to him who is the life of the soul, and quite unacquainted with a life of faith on the Son of God. Again, there are others who have been very wicked in their younger days, have been in the army or navy, and then and there have committed all wickedness with greediness. Now, if these men are separated from their wicked companions, and live where sobriety is more in fashion, they drop their oaths, and go regularly to church: and if they have entered into the married state, and prove faithful to the marriage-bed, then they count themselves converted, and bless their happy state, though they have never undergone, and know nothing of a saving change. Though the most wicked are at all periods of life invited to return to God, yet what numbers perish through delusion, are averse to try themselves, and build for eternity on sand! Not to speak of the delusions of popery, which makes a merchandise of souls, there are some who, because they have had some legal terrors, some awakenings, and some resolutions to amend, though ignorant of the new birth, think they are converted: and some in the decline of life, feeling death fast approaching, begin to be startled at dissolution, and affrighted to plunge into eternity, condemn the grosser actions of their life, and their ill-spent time, and so, to make amends for all, read much in the Bible, and other religious books; but still the sin of their nature lies out of sight: nor do they advert to this, that

a man must be born again, else he shall never see the kingdom of heaven; and yet such men pass for converts among the men of the world.

MEDITATION LXXIV.

On seeing slaves at work.

Leghorn, April 10, 1759.

To what hard circumstances are some fellow-creatures reduced! These poor men are in bondage, without any expectation of freedom till death deliver them. Are not their heavy burdens and severe labor punishment enough, without dragging the iron chain, which, locked about their ancles, links them two and two, or couples them like dogs together? and yet, as if all this were not severity enough, see the armed soldiers attend them every where!

So, O sinners! and worse deals satan with you, and yet you will not leave his service, his slavery, and become Christ's free men.

Whence is it that the men of the world, the sons of vice, think the saints of God shackled and confined, and that themselves only are free; and assume the title of libertines and free-thinkers, when indeed they are fettered drudges, narrow souls, and bond-slaves? The saints, and they alone, walk at liberty, being ransomed from their cruel captivity by price, and delivered by power.

These slaves have hard labour, but a coarse and scanty diet; so, when sinners weary themselves in the fire, they are fed, but with wind, and their belly filled, but with the whirlwind.

They are under the check and controul of soldiers, who are commonly the dregs of the people; so the sinner is under the check of the meanest passions, under the influence of the most sordid lusts, and sees not his misery.

Satan, like this prince,* makes the men that run in his

* The grand duke of Tuscany, who was sovereign of Leghorn.

service, drag along with them all the signs of slavery, and badges of bondage, which it is possible for them to be loaded with; and they even weary themselves for very vanity. Their pleasures pierce (what can slaves enjoy?) and give pain; their joys are acid, and their enjoyments full of torment. All that they can possess themselves of, has still a deficiency; and yet they hunt after shadows, and pursue imaginary bliss. Moreover, satan, like the centries of these poor slaves, is still pushing sinners on to works of darkness, and the reward at last is more shame, more sorrow, and more torment.

Though these men toil hard all the day, yet at night they have not a soft bed to rest thereon their weary limbs; so the sinners that weary themselves to commit wickedness all the day of life, at last lie down in sorrow amidst devouring flames.

Indeed these poor creatures have the night allowed for their repose, but sinners often pass the silent night in scenes of darkness, and their very dreams are filled with the rambles of the day.

Again, these are slaves through life, but death unlocks the fetters, and knocks off the chains, and gives them perfect liberty: but with the wicked it is not so, for if grace deliver them not, death only seals their slavery, and shuts them up in the prison of the bottomless pit. Oh! melancholy truth, that satan's slaves should be so many, and so content with their sad condition, though death and hell attend its latter end.

MEDITATION LXXV.

Quarantine.

Under sail near Sardinia, April 21, 1759.

It is a laudable practice among these nations, to make all ships, that come from places where the plague now and then appears, perform quarantine; and during that time to forbid their own people all correspondence with the suspected crews. If it is commendable to be careful of the welfare of a nation, how culpable is that church that *receives* or *keeps* in her communion persons immoral

in their life, or unsound in the faith. How dangerous in private persons, who pretend to be religious, to contract acquaintance, intimacy, or friendship with men of loose morals or libertine principles. O my soul! come not thou into their secret, into their society! How cautious should we be to mingle in the company of the wicked, where we are sure to suffer one way or other! And our care herein ought to extend to all the connections of life. Would I live in the same city with men dying daily of infectious diseases? would I admit into my house persons to serve me, if laboring under the plague? and would I take into my bosom that person, in other respects however amiable and dear, if full of the pestilence? How agreeable, then, to have the fearers of God, the citizens of Zion, for the men of my city? to have Christ's free men for servants in my family! and such as have an interest in Christ for my nearest connections!

Some suttlers adventure along-side, and sell for an extravagant price such things as we want, and cannot go ashore to purchase; they pretend not to touch us, but at arm's length, and with a board too, to reach out the commodity, and receive the money: Even so, men for the love of gain will go every length; will risk not only the peace, but the salvation of their souls, for a temporal advantage. O to see things in their proper light, and not put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; time in the place of eternity, and eternity in the place of time; the creature in the room of God, and give God no room at all.

The longed for day arrives, when the officers of health inspect the crew, pronounce us clean, and permit us to come ashore; and then we mingle in every company, appear in every place: Even so, when Jesus, in that memorable day, a day longed for by the lovers of his name, acquits his saints before an assembled world, they shall rise to heaven, walk the streets of glory, mingle with angels, and dwell forever with God.

MEDITATION LXXVI.

The Needle.

May 5, 1759.

Of what excellent use is the compass to the mariner in his course from one country to another! It is his guide over the trackless ocean, so that the darkness of the night shortens not his sail, nor turns him out of the way. By this he reaches the remotest parts of the world, and adventures out into the unmeasurable main. By this the trading nations stand and flourish, and kingdoms share mutually the commodities of one another. Even such is the everlasting gospel, such the word of God, to the rational world. By this we reap the blessings of paradise, and are enriched with the productions of the better country. By that mariners plow the wide ocean; by this we launch into unbounded eternity itself.

The usefulness of the needle rises from the magnetic virtue with which it is impregnated, and which makes it point always to the pole; so the excellency of the scripture is, that it came not by the will of men, but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and therefore it leads all who will attend to its instructions only out to God. Now, as one piece of metal, capable of receiving the magnetical influence, will communicate it to another piece of the same metal; yet, whatever way the virtue is received, when properly suspended, it points not to the load-stone, but to the true pole; so the scriptures and the ordinances never teach men to rest in them, but to rise to God, the chief good, and ultimate end of all; and to this purpose all inspiration points, and all teaching and preaching tend.

How deplorable were a ship at sea without its compass! and no less so were the world wanting revelation, without which they could not find the haven of glory. What, then, must the misery of those nations be, who sit in gross darkness! and the cruelty of those who will not let the poor people look into the words of eternal life!

But, alas! for all this noble *assistant* of navigation, how many ships perish in storms, or mistake their reckon-

ings, and are dashed on rocks! Even so, in the Christian world, for all this divine guide, how many make shipwreck of a good conscience, perish amidst the storms of temptation, in the dark night of defection, and, by opposing error to truth, dash against immoveable rocks, and are lost for ever.

The load-stone is in no respect so useful to the seaman, as the scriptures to the Christian, by which errors are discovered, dangers disclosed, doubts discussed, darkness dispelled, and our eternal concerns laid open to our view. They are our cloud that covers us in the desert, a light to our path, our companion by the way, our counsellors, and our song in the house of our pilgrimage.

The compass is of little or no use at home, when we take up our fixed residence, and pass no more from shore to shore, from pole to pole: So, when the saints arrive at heaven, and take up their last abode in the divine presence, of gospel ordinances and the scriptures, they shall stand in need no more.

But again, how does that *needle* give a lively idea of the soul that is truly united to Christ! it seeks its centre, and the saint says to his soul, "Return to thy rest, O my soul!" Take the compass to whatever part of the world you please, still it turns to the pole; so the saints in all conditions, and in all places, still seek to Christ; and like the Jews in captivity, who prayed with their faces toward Jerusalem, so the saints in their pilgrimage have their faces towards Zion, their hearts heavenward, their conversation in heaven.

Indeed it is possible to toss the *needle* from its pole, but see in what confused motion it agitates, and never rests till it has reached its centre again; so the spouse may miss her Beloved, but she rests not seeking him every where, and asking at every one she meets, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" nor gives over the inquiry till she find him, and, with all the vehemency of divine affection, embraces him in the arms of her soul, with a resolution never to let him go again.

The attractive power in the magnet is a secret in nature, for no visible change is in the needle more than before; it is by the effects that we know it has been touched by the load-stone, in its attracting, and being attracted, and turning to the pole: So the new birth, the spi-

ritual union between Christ and the soul, is an unsearchable mystery that no finite creature can explain; for there is a glorious change made in the man, yet the man is not changed: he continues still a man, human, frail, changeable, mortal, possessed of the same feelings, powers, passions, only they are all directed into a noble channel, and by this the change is known.

Finally (to add no more) as the needle is always in a tremulous motion, though pointing toward its pole, because of the restless ocean on which it is, and the false attraction with which it meets; yet, when the ship is laid up and the compass set on solid ground, the needle will point to its pole for ever, without the least hair-breadth of variation: so is it with the saints. They endeavour to make God the rest and centre of their souls; yet in this day of sin and sorrow, in this vale of misery and tears, where false attractions surround them, their dependance is not so entire on him, their faith not so firm, nor their communion so close as they could wish; but when they are translated to the highest heaven, a three-one God shall be the rest of their souls, their centre and sole delight for ever.

MEDITATION LXXVII.

In a Roman Catholic church.

May 18, 1759.

Ah! what a poor figure does human invention make in the worship of God! Where a superstitious shew prevails, godly sincerity decays. The expences here are great, but the profit none. They have lifted up the graving tools of human invention on the altar of God, which renders it polluted. To what purpose are all these statutes, images, and paintings? to what end so many representations of a suffering Saviour? The new life is begun by the operation of the Spirit of God, and not by an inspection of pictures; and Christ formed spiritually in the soul is the end of revelation, but not to cut him out by the tool of the statuary. It is true, here he stands

with all the signs of agony and pain, the pricking thorns are wreathed about his head, and the blood is streaming down on every side! but who is this? did I not know the story, did not the superscription tell me, I should take him for some great malefactor that was so cruelly used? A man, indeed, in all imaginable anguish, is cut out to the life, where the skill of the artist, but the folly of the contriver, eminently appear; but nothing more appears, not one beam of his divinity shines forth. If he were no more than what this statue sets him forth, a poor, infirm suffering mortal, our hopes would have died with him, but had had no resurrection: it might excite our sympathy as to a fellow-creature, but never claim our faith as a Saviour, Christ the Lord. The union of the two natures in one person, and his substitution in the room of sinners, is the interesting mystery, and basis of religion. Now, what painter or limner, what sculptor or artist can exhibit this? how vain, then, their incentives to devotion! Yea, though our Saviour were yet alive, his humanity could not be the object of adoration; hence he reproved the young man for calling him "Good Master," seeing he considered him not as God-man, but only as man: and so says the apostle, "Yea, though we have known Christ, after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more." Streams rise no higher than their fountain, so that their unwarrantable representations give me at most but a faint view even of human sufferings. The dumb statue emits no melting cries, no throes and twistings of the body, or varied distortions of the countenance, no affecting sighs, or agonizing groans; still the tears stand in one place, and the falling blood is not succeeded by more, because the tears have no fountain, and the blood no veins to afford a supply; so that to read the inspired account gives the Christian a more perfect knowledge and striking view of his sufferings, than all the master-pieces of the best painters. But when they give but a faint view of bodily sufferings, what can set forth the agonies of our Saviour's soul, which like wax before the fire, was melted in the midst of his bowels, and was poured out like water? Can they paint the strokes of divine vengeance which he bore for us, or depict the hidings of his Father's countenance, which gave so deep a wound? These are things for faith, not for sense; and it is the ex-

cellency of faith that it can and may intermeddle with divine things, while sense must stand at a distance.

As images strike our fancy, and impressions of them abide with us, a dumb image stands before us, when we adore the living God; so that in effect we are praying to an idol, rather than to the Searcher of hearts. The idolators of old represented God by an ox, calf, fire, sun, man, and such-like, with which he was displeased; and the idolators of late represent the incarnate God, as a scourged, bleeding, suffering creature, with which he is no less displeased. But I must form no idea of God, that gives figure, limits, or bounds to him, because he is infinite; my soul must go out in my prayers, in the immensity of his perfections, and I must make my plea the meritorious sufferings of Jesus, which no art of man can set forth, as the Spirit of God can to the eye of faith in the renewed soul.

MEDITATION LXXVIII.

In a hot climate.

Gibraltar Bay, May 18, 1759.

WHAT frail creatures are we the sons of men! yet how madly bold, that dare contend with God, when heat or cold, increased but a few degrees, becomes intolerable! Here, in this southern clime, how scorching is the noonday sun! the earth receives so many solar sparks of fire, that sand and stones almost burn the naked skin that touches them. Now, if it is so hot so many degrees from the meridian, what must it be there, by the sun darting down his direct beams? and if carried nearer the sun still, how must the heat increase, till approaching the burning orb, we find it all one material fire, one substantial flame?

Now, saints and sinners are like the inhabitants of the world, some dwelling in a mild, some in a scorching climate. O miserable condition of the wicked, who change from ill to worse, till their misery can admit almost of no increase, but in the eternity of it! Here his anger scorches, and hereafter his wrath consumes them. O! who knows the power of his wrath? Now they can put up

with their case through stupidity, though they know no inward solid comfort; but how will they stand when oceans of boiling vengeance will roll over them for ever? when they shall be set under the burning beams of inexorable justice, and fiery indignation? Our sun, even at his surface or centre, is mild compared to his displeasure who kindled that sun, and set it in the firmament.

Just now my head is pained with the beating of the sun-beams, and all my members lifeless; every pour pours out my strength, and every fibre of my tongue pants for the cold spring; but there a rock presents itself, whose friendly height takes off the schorching beams, and hides me from the heat.—Now that I am arrived, how refreshful to stand in the shadow here, while all is parched and scorched around me. So, and vastly more, desirable is Christ to the soul that is scorched with Sinai's fiery flames, and stands panting under the burning wrath of an offended God. The God-man "is an hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of waters in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock," which neither melts before the heat, nor transmits it on the fainting pilgrim "in a weary land." My body is sensible of this covert from the heat; may my soul be as sensible of thy diviner shadow! Some rocks are parched with drought, but the *Rock of ages* has the fountain of salvation flowing from him. I must leave this rock, though refreshful, otherwise I cannot pursue my intended journey; but in the shadow of the everlasting Rock, I must rest for ever, else I shall not be able to reach the end of my journey, the land of promise. To my comfort I find refreshing in the Rock of salvation, even all that is needful in my passage heavenward, till I arrive at glory, become an inhabitant of the Rock for ever, and shout mine everlasting song from the top of the mountains of bliss.

MEDITATION LXXIX.

Fishers.

Gibraltar Mole, May 31, 1759.

HERE, on the shore of this vast sea, where innumerable creatures are, I stand, and am entertained to see the various methods fishers try to entangle the finny tribe;

some with the hook and bate suspended on the water, others with the bait sunk quite to the bottom; some use the insignificant earth-worm, and succeed therewith, and what they catch with it they make a bait for larger fish; others use all sorts of nets, and spread the sail, and ply the oar in pursuit of the prey, and thus catch some of all kinds.

The ocean is the world, where all the sons of men swim, every one pursuing his own game; and it holds truer of them than of the scaly family, that though they too often devour one another, yet they have their common enemy, the old serpent, the blood-thirsty dragon. Now, of those whom satan makes a prey, some are taken with baits of pleasure, others in the snares and nets of temptation, at first as it were against their will, through the reproofs of a natural conscience, or the effects of a religious education, but in a little are taken captive by him at his will. Again, how does satan make use of one man to ensnare another, and draw him to hell! How often do evil communications corrupt good manners, and companions of fools are destroyed! Therefore how careful should we be to shun the company of the wicked, for no sooner has satan made a prey of one soul, than he makes him a bait for others; and whomsoever this old serpent stings, he instils such a poison into them, that they can do nothing but sting others to death, though they themselves be mortally wounded. This may look strange, because some men, though they have no religion, appear very sober, but attend them a little, and you will find nothing but carnality, deadness, earthly-mindedness, breathe through all they do and say.

At shore and at sea fishers are busy to unpeople the waters, fowls from above feed on them, and fishes through the whole deep prey upon one another; but man's condition is still worse, for, though he has enemies behind and before, dangers on every hand, and satan watching at all points, he is also his own enemy.

But, on the other hand, O that the waters that issue out of the sanctuary would come into the great sea, to heal the waters, whither the curse has already come, that every thing might live. Let the gospel, that contains this flood of life, spread through the world with healing to every creature; and let men of all ranks and condi-

tions be taken in the net of the gospel. Let the fishers stand all along the banks, and be successful in catching souls, and winning them to Christ, out of every tribe and tongue under heaven.

MEDITATION LXXX.

In a southern climate.

These southern climates certainly, as to fruitfulness, have the better of our northern isles; and when the traveller tells the entertaining account of spreading vines, and shady fig-trees, the beautiful pomegranate, and nourishing almond, the fragrant orange, and cooling lemon, with every other rare and useful production, it kindles a desire in others to possess them, and makes them bless the inhabitants of such fine and fruitful countries. But were the relation full, and the account faithful to every particular, it would make them bless their situation in a land, where the mountains are sometimes covered with snow, and the waters concealed in ice. Did they rehearse the dangers and difficulties found there, where the lion roars after his prey, where bears and tygers range for blood, where scorpions instil torment with their poison, and serpents sting to death; yea, where, though free from all these misfortunes, the scorching sun fatigues even to faintness, and the beautiful day by extreme heat becomes a burden; I say, were the delights weighed with the dangers, the fatal incumbrances with the fruitful productions, it would cast out ambition, bring in contentment, and make us settle with pleasure in what we might call the barren spot. This is a real truth, and an interesting inference may be drawn from it, whereby we may regulate our wrong notions and blind opinions of rich and great men. Like the fruitful countries, they are only happy in our esteem, because they seem to lie under the meridian of worldly felicity, and sun-shine of prosperity; yea, we are confirmed in this opinion, because the better part of their condition only is told us, as travellers do of the fine, but foreign fields. With them, however, it too often fares as with these fertile lands; for worldly gran-

deur has the roaring lion of unbridled lust often let loose on it, with all the train (more destructive than the tyger, bear, and other beasts of prey) of unruly passions, besides the unnumbered swarms of poisonous thoughts crawling over all the powers of mind. Now, though prosperity of itself brings not forth sins, any more than the heat of these climates creates hurtful creatures, yet there they grow, and find large pasture; while sanctified affliction, like a cold and northern climate, has none of these incumbrances.

Were the life of great men, to their secret thoughts, laid before us, they would appear far from being so happy as we suppose. Their ambition, their emulation, their jealousies, their projects, their disappointments, their cares, their company and confusion, hinder them to enjoy themselves as men; yea, should all these remove, the abundance of their wealth will not suffer them to sleep; and, take them in the general, whatever they may be in this world, they are, a few excepted, far from being happy with respect to the world to come.

The world, then, is like a great body which God has made, and tempered so that there should be no schism in it. He has lessened the pleasures of the sweetest climes by some real disadvantages, and sweetened the most disagreeable spots by some noble accommodations; that man, who is but a pilgrim, may be pleased with every place where God may cast his lot, and neither boast of his own country, nor despise the native places of others.

Again, the same is in the world of mankind, the rational body, that there should be no schism there. Hence the poorest man has as much sweetness in his condition (bodily health, exercise of reason, peace of mind, obedient children, &c.) as blunts his grief; and the greatest man has as much gall, (corroding anxiety, insatiable appetites, broken constitution, pensive thoughts, peevish temper, inward disquiet, &c.) as acidulates, or embitters his joys. This should render men content with that station God has placed them in, and not to expect perfect felicity below; for every man thinks happiness is in another, not in himself, which proves that there is not one possessed of it on earth; but he comes nearest it who is most content with his own condition and present circumstances in every respect, not either murmuring at crosses

when they come upon himself, or envying others who seem to be exempted from them; and keeps his mind on the better country, where all glorious beatitudes shall be enjoyed without any thing to lessen the felicity, or abate the bliss.

MEDITATION LXXXI.

On a court-martial.

Gibraltar Bay, August 8, 1759.

EVERY law is made to restrain from vice, and bind to duty, and every nation has its own code of laws, military and civil. The martial law is accounted severe; and there is a necessity for it, because mutiny and disobedience to orders, cowardice in the time of action, and desertion to the enemy would have the most fatal effects. But whatever be the offence, a few considerations would not be improper at such a time for the members of the court martial.

1. To do to the pannels, in their circumstances, as they would wish to be done to themselves if in these very circumstances.

2. To mind that an example and admonition to others is costly when at the life of an individual.

3. To pass no other sentence on the meanest than they would do on the highest for the same fault.

4. To consult how they can answer to their conscience and to God, for their decisions, deaf to every thing but justice and humanity.

5. To incline rather to the side of mercy than severity; and thus to imitate God in his most amiable perfection.

6. To reflect if they are as strict in punishing sins against God, as desertion against their Sovereign, and offences against themselves; and to consider whose honour should be most attended to. And,

7. To fix it in their mind, that in a little they must stand before the tremendous bar of God, where all distinctions cease. No more the sovereign and the subject, the admiral and seaman, the captain and the soldier, the judge and the pannel.

But from the proceedings of these courts I may learn instruction; for if earthly kings so punish deserters, will not the King of glory deal awfully with the backsliders in heart? Those he has vouchsafed to know, and taken into his honourable service, shall suffer severely, if they fall away from him. Sinners in the Christian world shall have the hottest hell; and of all sinners, those who once tasted of the powers of the world to come, shall suffer the most excruciating torments.

Again, this may remind me of that day when not only actions shall be tried, but even my inmost thoughts examined, and not one concealed. The sentence of this court only respects the body, and must be executed in time, though in the execution thereof, it should finish time to the criminal; but the sentence of that tribunal reaches my soul in all her powers, and stands in force, and is put in execution, through the endless ages of eternity. O that it may be a sentence of absolution and peace!

MEDITATION LXXXII.

*On some who were burnt by a quantity of gun-powder, catching fire, in time of an engagement.**

Under sail, August 29, 1759.

Material fire sometimes in its effects is terrible. What can be quicker, and more transient than the explosion of gun-powder; yet what direful effects has it had on these poor men whom it only seemed to touch as it flew along! So dismal, that even those who have lost their limbs are objects of delight in comparison of them whose visage is blacker than a coal; whose beauty is marred, and whose countenance cannot be known; whose skin is parched and falleth off from their flesh; and, to sum up the whole, whose pain, though external, has kindled such a fever within, that the frame of nature suffers; they rave and pine away, till the scene is finished in death.

Now, can I look on these miserable patients without

* Six men were miserably burnt at one gun during the engagement, August 17, some of whom died.

letting my reflections shoot away, and fix on the world of spirits, on such of them as are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? Ah! what a shocking sight is a tormented soul, and what miserable spectacles will the damned be, when soul and body are united to suffer in the fire that shall not be quenched, and by the worm that never dies! the most lovely person will be a loathing, and the most beautiful an abhorring to all flesh. When a passing flame that goes but skin-deep, produces such dismal effects, what soul can apprehend the torment of those that are sentenced to the flames of hell? Who can dwell with devouring fire? (think on this, my soul, and study to escape) who with everlasting burnings? If the productions of nature and human art can be so destructive, how much more fierce must that fire be that is not blown, that flame that is not kindled by created invention?

There are some antidotes against the scorchings of material fire, but none against the burnings of devouring wrath. Here the poor patients are perpetually sipping some cooling liquid to allay their thirst within, but there not one drop of water can be had to cool their scorched tongue, who swim in seas of fire, mingled with brimstone, which go into their very souls, tormenting every part, agonizing every power. Here, in these poor men one part suffers, and the rest sympathize; but there every part, every power suffers, and none can sympathize. Surely, were the covering taken off hell, and the world allowed to look into the burning lake, they would drop down dead in a moment, the saints in a transport of joy, that they are to escape the flames; and sinners in the anguish of despair, that they are to plunge into them at their departing moments. Now, seeing these things are not dreams, why will not we awaken to our danger and our duty, and be wise before it be too late?

MEDITATION LXXXIII.

*On a sea-engagement, fought August 17.**

August 22, 1759.

Sin is the source of all human miseries, making men, who should like brethren live together, devour one another like the wild beasts of the field. The ocean, which is the boundary of kingdoms, by their invention, is made the seat of war; hence the briny wave is tinged with human blood; and dangers, unknown to the land, surround us, for we may be blown up in a moment, or in the twinkling of an eye go down to the chambers of the deep. Besides, what can be a more terrible scene than so many great guns thundering mutual destruction, darkening all with smoke, and spewing out fire and death? The loss of officers, the groans of the wounded, cause no intermission till the vanquished yield and strike to the conquerors.

Now, if the wrath of men, who themselves are crushed before the moth, be so fierce, and if it be terrible to meet an enemy, though formed of the clay, how much more so to meet the God of forces, the Lord of Sabbaoth, in his burning wrath! How awful, ineffable, and tremendous, beyond conception, must be the thunders of his incensed right hand! When the hour of patience is past, the thunderings shall begin, but who shall be able to stand before them through eternity; compared with whose bolts, the broadsides of a *first-rate* are but the falling drops of morning-dew; for who knows the power of his wrath, the terror of his vengeance?

But, again, the sons of men reprove the expectants of a future world. When they see they neither can escape nor overcome, but must perish unless they strike their colors, anon they yield themselves prisoners, and live: but sinners are obstinate to the very last, though they can

* The engagement referred to, is that of Admiral Boscawen with the Toulon fleet, commanded by M. de la Clue. It was fought a little without the Straits, and lasted five hours. Three of the enemy's ships were taken, and two burnt. The Portland, on board of which the author was, engaged the French Admiral for nearly an hour before she received assistance. Her loss was very considerable, yet during the first hour's fighting, not one was even wounded.

never fly out of his hand; yea, the rebellion of their heart remains, though the Lord God of recompences punishes them through eternity.

Again, what a lively representation of our uncertain departure is here! One who is now well is in a moment no more, and is taken away from the midst of his companions into the world of spirits, unconscious of the stroke that finishes him, till felt! When the engagement began, many might hope to share the honor of the victory, and to divide the spoil, who, by a sudden death, are disappointed of all; so, many in the prime of life, when projecting great schemes, are cut off by a fever, or a fall, and must leave his affairs in extreme confusion. How great is the folly of man! Though nothing concerns him so much as death, yet with nothing does he concern himself so little! Here a few hours close engagement cools the rage of the keenest warrior, and decides the contest; how melancholy, then, must their condition be, who on seas of wrath, must bear the thunderbolts of Jehovah's right hand for an eternity, without intermission, and without any possibility of an escape! On such a day as this, an enemy's powder and shot may fall short; but the magazines of vengeance are infinite, and the perpetual frown of him who is angry with sinners every day, will protract their agony and torment with their existence.

MEDITATION LXXXIV.

On Prisoners.

Under sail, August 30, 1759.

One consequence of war, at least of victory, is, that some are made prisoners; and among contending armies on the day of battle, prisoners are made on both sides. By the laws of civilized nations, they are treated with sympathy and tenderness, as becomes fellow-creatures and prisoners of war; yet their best situation has always something in it disagreeable, and (by the cruelty of those who forget the golden rule, to deal with others, in every situation, as they themselves would choose to be dealt

with if in the same condition) something almost intolerable. For, 1. Though they are fed, yet their allowance is not the same with the king's servants. 2. They have not the privileges of the ship's crew as to bedding, but are crowded together in an uncomfortable confinement. 3. No confidence can be put in them; hence, though we should chance to engage an enemy, as they could not be trusted to fight, so they would not share in the honor or advantage of the victory. 4. Though in the day-time they sometimes mingle with the ship's company, and partake of their liberty, yet they have always the badge of bondage, being attended by sentries, and at night are separated and put under double guards, and so remain till the ensuing morning.

This is the fate of many in war; but, alas! a worse fate attends the rational world, where all are prisoners, and bound with the fetters of sin, but such as walk at large in Christian liberty. And though the wicked enjoy liberties and riches in common with others, yea, more than others, yet "a little that a righteous man hath is better than the wealth of many wicked;" for if a little where love is, be better than an house full of sacrifices with strife, surely a very little, with the love of God, is better than great riches with his curse.

Now saints and sinners meet and mingle in the same assemblies, join in the same societies, and share the same privileges; yet the one always drags the heavy chain about with him, is a slave to every lust, the servant of sin, the captive of the mighty enemy, and the prey of the terrible destroyer; but the other, being delivered from these, walks in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. While sinners feed on swinish husks, and break their teeth with gravel, the saints are allowed to feast on heavenly manna, and to drink of the water of life. The first lies down among thorny cares, disquiet, terror, and remorse; but the last has a sweet recumbency on the love of God, takes his rest in the promise, and finds it a couch that can ease his pain, and remove his complaint.

Again, as these men are separated and classed together at night, so, at the night of death, the wicked mingle no more with the righteous; for while the souls of saints soar aloft to everlasting day, and their bodies rest in the peaceful grave till the joyful resurrection, the spirits of

sinners are shut up in the prison of hell, and their bodies in beds of corruption till the general judgment. A little time brings about the freedom of our captives, they are set at liberty in a few months perhaps, and at the longest when the war comes to an end; but should the war continue as long as they live, yet death shall deliver them from the power of every mortal, and translate them into the world of spirits; but those that are risen up in rebellion against God, he shall shut up in hell, and pour forth his vengeance on them for evermore.

Finally, we may see the depravity of the world in the conduct of our friends, who would condole more our being taken prisoner by an enemy, and losing all we had, than they bewail our natural, our unrenewed state, our loss of the image of God, of heaven, and of glory.

MEDITATION LXXXV.

A reflection on the Royal Psalmist's expression, Psal. xlii. 7, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me."

Near Guernsey, June 3, 1758.

O ASTONISHING comparison of an ineffable excess of anguish! "At the noise of thy water-spouts, deep calleth unto deep," that both may meet together, to heighten the flow of my misery to the last extremity. Now, from the tossing of this restless ocean, I may somewhat learn the force of the metaphor. Here, then, many waves, many billows dash upon us; nor do a thousand preceding waves, or ten thousand foaming billows, that have spent their fury on us, stir up pity in the raging flood that forms itself into dreadful billows to fall on us afresh, and that in all quarters, not like the regular course of a rapid torrent, but like the random surges of an unruly ocean. The sea-sick passengers aboard find no compassion, but reel and stagger if they attempt to walk; and if they sit are thrown from side to side; nay, though we were hanging for life upon the very wreck, the briny deep would cover us in its cold bosom, or, dashing us from wave to wave, would spew us on the shore.

Now, if nothing milder than the ocean, not in halcyon days, but when wearing all its terrors, when roaring, and raging with universal confusion, when covered with ten thousand wrestling waves all eager to destroy, urged on by succeeding billows, and raised by the ruffling tempest from the foaming deep, could describe the condition of the psalmist, who was a saint, a favourite of heaven, in the day of God's withdrawing and hiding himself, though but for a moment; what shall set out the eternal anguish of those from whom he is gone for ever? What billows of eternal wrath, what surges of divine indignation, shall overflow them for evermore! There, in that state, their misery is without mercy, their sea has no shore, and their ocean no bound. Hence I see, that if God is pleased to shine on the soul, all crosses are sweetened, all afflictions lightened, and the man made greatly to rejoice; while if he hides himself, even blessings wear a gloom, and every thing lowers, till he arise again with healing in his wings.

MEDITATION LXXXVI.

On a short indisposition.

Two days ago, flying pains perplexed me, and made me turn and toss from side to side, seeking what I could not find, ease to my weary body. The indisposition filled me with disquietude, scattered each composed thought, and fixed an acute sense of pain. Indeed I soon got the better of it, but may I thereby be instructed of the fierceness of the torment of the damned: and let them who have cancer, gout, stone, or any other grievous complaint, think what torment must be, and thereby study to escape while there is left a way to escape; or to prize their deliverance (if delivered) from so great a death as the second death is, where all is torment in the highest degree; where the bed is burning brimstone, the chains and fetters of fire and flame, their horizon the blackness of darkness for ever, their companions devils and damned spirits; and where every part is on the very rack, and nothing free of torment. The most acute agonies which we feel

in time, would be a kind of pleasure and delight, in comparison of the torments of hell!

What shall people, labouring under excruciating diseases then think, if they have no hopes that death, which must end the disease, shall mend the matter? O then, to be wise in time, and to be taught by every indisposition to mind the concerns of an unseen world, for who knows the power of his wrath? and if I can scarce endure a little pang in one part, how shall I suffer torment in every part and power, in every sense and faculty, through the whole soul and whole body, and that ages without end?

MEDITATION LXXXVII.

On putting out a light.

Off the coast of France, June 8, 1758.

The place I dwell in being secluded from the solar ray, is obliged to a glimmering candle; and when that is extinguished, total darkness prevails at once. This puts me in mind of the more mournful situation of the natural man, the unrenewed soul, that stumbles in darkness, and walks in the midnight gloom. While the saints walk in the rays of the Sun of righteousness, and rejoice in the light of his countenance, poor sinners dwell in the region and shadow of death. Let them boast of the glimmering light of reason; it can no more direct them about the affairs of their souls, the interests of eternity, than we can survey the midnight stars by the light of a candle. But faith beholds spiritual things, and takes steady views of eternal excellencies. With what reluctance do we remember the wicked, who "caused their terror in the land of the living!" and how does their memory stink when dead, like the snuff of that extinguished candle! And as there is no light, no spiritual illumination in them, so at death they are driven from the light of life, the light of hope, and the light of the gospel, into the darkness of utter despair, and into the eternal storm and tempest of God's devouring wrath. And is this the last, but lamentable end of the wicked! while the righteous, on the other hand, like the morning-sun, concealed by the disking

clouds of worldly meanness and contempt, shine more and more unto the perfect day, grow from grace to grace, till, fixed in the firmament of glory, they shine celestial suns. Let my light, then, be spiritual, my happiness that which is hereafter, and my glory that which shall be revealed.

MEDITATION LXXXVIII.

On dividing the spoil.

In all ages of the world, so great has the joy of men been on this occasion, that it has become proverbial, "as men rejoice that divide the spoil:" and no wonder. To come off in safety from the field of battle, while not only foes, but fellow-soldiers fell around them; and to come off victorious, and find themselves possessed of goods they never labored for, of riches they never expected, must swell their breast with transport and joy. And this joy of theirs in the severest manner reprimands me for not being filled with more joy in believing, for not thinking more of him who is more "glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey." Now, though the metropolis of this kingdom (the gleanings of whose villages create this cheerfulness) were robbed of all its wealth, and laid in one heap; and, to swell the wonderful pile, though all the stores of the silken Indies, the gold of Ophir, and the precious stones of every land, were added; yea, to make the collection perfect in its kind, though all that ever had a place in the museum of the philosopher, the cabinet of the curious, or the treasures of kings, were amassed together, till the heap rose into a hill, or swelled into a mountain, from which the slaves might gather crowns and sceptres, the poor treasure in abundance, and the naked shine in silks and cloth of gold; yet thou art infinitely more excellent than this mountain of prey, and that on a double account. 1. Nothing here is for the soul, all is for the body. 2. All these things must be torn from the possessor in the hour of death, and cannot attend him to another world. But Christ satisfies all desires, replenishes the whole soul, makes happy in time, and happy to

eternity, and is a portion every way commensurate to the unbounded wishes, and immortal nature of the soul. Why should the saints less rejoice than these men that divide the spoil, when in a little the King himself in person shall deal crowns and thrones, kingdoms and dominions, yea, the goodly heritage of the hosts of nations, to every saint above?

This spoil, if it enrich the conquerors, impoverishes the conquered, and perhaps has cost many of them their lives; but Christ may, in all his offices, relations, fulness, and glory, be the entire possession of every particular child of adoption, without diminution or injury to any of their happy fellow-heirs.

Some who engaged the enemy fell down slain, and are now where a whole world of these trifles, which afford survivors so much joy, would not be accounted worthy of a wish or a glance for ever.

Henceforth, let me rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great store of spoil, and esteem the word of thy mouth better than thousands of gold and silver. I shall never be robbed of the heavenly treasure, which scatters my fears, dispels my despondencies, enriches my eternity, and ravishes my whole soul.

MEDITATION LXXXIX.

A daily catechism for seamen.

March 25, 1758.

1. How do I like the company of the wicked, and the converse of ungodly men?

2. Is their swearing as disagreeable to me as when I came first aboard; or am I more reconciled to their blasphemous talk?

3. Is my abhorrence of sin the greater, the more I see of sin? as a man's fears increase with the increase of his foes, so should my hatred of sin with the increase of my danger.

4. The more that I am beset with snares and sin, am I the more watchful against sins and snares?

5. Have I forgot to look into myself in the midst of this hurry and confusion? reflection is a duty which no situation can loose me from.

6. Does the reaction of sin reiterate my grief and abhorrence of it? or, like a lion's keeper, venture I to sport with the destroyer, from which at first I started?

7. Do I resist the first appearance of sin? for sin, as well as strife, is like the letting out of waters, which at first appears a little spout, but as it passes along pushes on every side, till it spreads into an impetuous torrent, which nothing can resist, and therefore should be left off before it be meddled with.

8. Does the impiety of the company, or any other hindrance, prevent the performance of secret prayer, on reading the scriptures, as formerly?

9. Is the sabbath still strictly observed by me, by my keeping not only from bad actions, but idle words and vain thoughts?

10. Am I careful to purge myself from all the sins which I have heard through the day, by reflecting on their vileness, protesting against them in mine own breast, dipping by faith in the blood of sprinkling, and praying that wherein I have been guilty in a greater or less degree, I may be pardoned?

11. Am I studious to draw the more near to God, the more that all things would drive me from God? and to beg of him, that according to my days and demands for aid, so my strength from him may be?

12. Am I ready to drop a word against vice, or in favour of religion, without regarding ridicule, not knowing where a blessing may light; or that at least they may know that there has been, if not a prophet, yet a reprover among them?

MEDITATION XC.

A proper inspection.

Lying off the French coast, June 8, 1758.

AT all times men ought to examine their state, and fitness for going into another world; more especially when old age has overtaken us, or the pestilence is in our bor

ders; or when called into the field of battle, or into the dangers of the roaring ocean. Now, as we may be surprised at any time by some event, we should be prepared at all times for every event. And, as one of these situations is at present mine, it is my duty to propose some interesting questions, to try myself thereby.

1. Am I content with salvation from Christ on any terms, that he be my complete Saviour, and that I be nothing at all?

2. If I believe, is my faith dead? or is it a living faith, working by love, and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness?

3. Do I love God? "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love;" and love to God and man is the fulfilling of the whole law.

4. Do I love the saints, and esteem the poor but pious ones, more than all the pompous sons of vice? "He that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him."

5. Is it my desire, that in all things God may be glorified, though it were by my dishonour and loss?

6. Do I choose rather to be the proverb and reproach of all the ungodly among whom I dwell, than to advance one word against religion?

7. Do I hate sin in its profits and pleasures in myself and others, because God hates it, and it ruins souls?

8. Do I rejoice more in hope of the glory of God, than in view of possessing all that the world can afford?

9. Is the exercise of religious duties the secret delight of my soul?

10. Do I faithfully strive against all sin, and count the victory over one lust a greater conquest than the taking a city?

11. Am I entirely resigned to the will of God in all things, being not only contented, but comforted with his disposal, though sometimes not what I would wish?

12. Is death often in my mind, judgment and eternity in my meditation; and am I always studying to be mortified to sin, and crucified to the world, that I may live to Christ?

13. Is the word of God the light, life, comfort, food, and inheritance of my soul, into which I daily seek and search?

14. Is sin growing more and more my burden; and are my struggles after perfection more vigorous than before, and more constant?

15. Am I, through grace, ever searching my ways, examining mine actions, looking into my heart, and watching over myself?

16. Is my desire of life mostly to serve God, and not to enjoy the pleasures of sense, but to be useful even in the matters of religion?

17. Is communion with God the delight of my soul? and have I more joy in the fore-thoughts of that fruition which the saints expect, than in all present vanities?

18. Have I daily recourse to the fountain of purification to be washed from my filth, and to be accepted in the Beloved?

19. Do I remember Zion in her affliction, Jerusalem in her calamity, being filled with a zeal for the declarative glory of God?

20. Dare I venture my eternal welfare on his gracious word of promise, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved; and that no sin shall condemn the soul that casts itself on Christ?

21. Do I believe that the love of God is unchangeable that his gift and callings are without repentance, and that at all times he is at hand, nor will desert his own in their last moments?

If I could return an affirmative to each of these queries it would shew me to be in a happy state, at peace with God, and in some measure prepared for the other world, so that I might go with undaunted courage to the day of battle, and fearless tread the field of blood, leaning on Christ alone.

MEDITATION XCI.

On a great storm of thunder, lightning, and rain.

Lying off France, June 9, 1758.

DARK is the night, but dismal the flash that scatters the darkness. At times the whole heaven seems in a blaze, while material streams of fire twinkle in our asto-

nished eye, and dart across the skies; then tremendous thunder roars, and whole clouds descend in heavy rain, while the noisy wind blows with impetuous force. Now, durst the atheist yet deny a God! Would not his conscience answer to the flames of fire, his troubled thoughts agree to the language of the thunder, that there is a Power above, that rules events below? When the night is so dark, the lightning so dreadful, the thunders so loud, and the rain so incessant, can any ascribe all to blind chance? Nay, the atheist himself must confess and tremble?

But, O sad effects of sin! what fills the pious soul with fear, and a secret sense of the power and greatness of God, drives the wicked into sin. They fear, but they swear; they are troubled, but they transgress. How terrible, then, will that day be, when the Judge shall come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on his foes! when flames shall dwell in ether, the skies be kindled, and cities, kingdoms and continents, be cast into the burning embrace! when thunders bursting from every cloud, around the whole sky, admit of no interval, but with one continued roar terrify all the nations, till silenced and lost in the sound of the last trumpet, which the dead, hitherto undisturbed, shall hear!

When fire and water in contention or elements at war are so terrible, how much more terrible must the God of nature be, when, arrayed in awful majesty, he comes to take vengeance on his enemies? Lest we forget his greatness, nature preaches to us, raging tempests and rending winds turn our remembrancers, flames of fire unfold our lesson before our eyes, and roaring thunders awaken our meditations. As in his temple every one talks of his glory, so in his tent (for which he has stretched out the heavens) every thing shews forth his power. Fire, rain, vapour, stormy wind, lightning, hail, snow, and thunder, praise him. Then, since in all things, I may see God, may my soul ever go out after him, and above all things see him in the face of Jesus, as reconciled, and speaking peace to me!

MEDITATION XCII.

On being interrupted in secret prayer.

Lying off France, June 13, 1758.

NOTHING can still the agitation of my spirit, but the fore-thoughts of perfect and eternal liberty, into which the sons of God shall shortly be delivered. Little needs the world without, disturb our retired moments; there is enough within to distract our meditations. But, O thrice happy day, which is approaching on the out-stretched wings of the promise when I shall stand among a numerous throng of adorers, worshipping before the throne, with the eye of my soul fixed on him that sits thereon; and not one of the many thousands of eternity shall disturb my adorations. The eye of my mind, the flow of my affection, and the flame of my love, shall eternally fix on the divine object, from whom none shall draw one thought away. Here my circumstance is doubly calamitous; for, though the busy throng should not break in on me, there is a throng of base distracting thoughts already within me, that will not be at rest; but there, as nothing shall disturb without, so nothing shall distract within. Not one trespassing thought, not one trifling idea, not a moment lost, nor one expression unbecoming the sacred subject, but all wrapt to the sublimest height of ecstacy; and every adoration of God, who is a Spirit, shall be in spirit and in truth—shall be without intermission through an indefatigable immortality, without interruption thro' consummate perfection, without wearying through inconceivable joy and delight, and without end, through an eternal duration.

MEDITATION XCIII.

On the armour of soldiers.

Lying off Normandy, June 13, 1758.

WHEN I behold the warlike race, and their glittering arms, how well they are accoutred for the field of battle, at no less than royal expence; it puts me in mind of him

who is Prince of the kings of the earth, and has an army maintained at much immenser cost, harnessed with much diviner armour, engaged in a more bloody war, against more desperate foes, but, supported by Almighty strength, are assured of conquest and a crown at last.

How are these men burdened with instruments of war wherever they go, for a soldier is but a poor man without his arms! Even so the spiritual soldier must never be without his armour, for the better armed, he finds himself the stronger. Besides, this is the word of command by the Captain of the Lord's hosts, to his armies: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for ye wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and (not forgetting brother-soldiers) with supplication for all saints."

But one thing I see, these men are allowed to carry no toys or trifles with them, only their arms, ammunition, and necessaries; so "no man that warreth" against hell, "entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

Again, these men are only safe, in setting their face always against their foes, being naked behind; so there is not a promise in all the scripture for the saint that turns his back before the enemy; while, if they resist, even their grand enemy shall flee from them.

These poor *privates*, as well as their commanders, must be in the hottest battle, encounter all the dangers, and perhaps fall in the engagement; but the Captain of our salvation has for us both fought and foiled the foe, swept

the field of battle, of principalities and powers, so that we are only called to return to the spoil.

Finally, how happy are Christ's soldiers, in comparison of these military men! The one is wounded often to death, the other is made always to triumph; the one has a scanty allowance every day; the other has access to all the fulness of God. The one is disbanded at last, and sent, when least able, to beg his bread and die in poverty; the other shall at last receive a crown, and be taken to dwell with the king eternal, immortal, invisible, for ever!

Let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth for earthly things; but may I fight on the side of Heaven, against sin and hell, for a heavenly crown, a crown of glory that fadeth not away!

MEDITATION XCIV.

All things made up in Christ.

Quiberon Bay, May 11, 1760.

Every one is subject to so many losses here, that, unless he has a share in the *bank of bliss*, he may soon become impoverished of all his enjoyments, and be a bankrupt as to felicity. But what an enriching privilege is an interest in Jesus, whereby I am *insured* against all losses, and furnished for all misfortunes! for though in the world I may have tribulation, yet in him who overcame the world, shall I have joy. It is true my nearest and dearest friends may be removed by death; but in him I have a store of dearer and diviner relatives. My riches may fly away as on eagle's wings, but in him I have the treasures of eternity; so that it is but for a moment, and in the meanest things, that I can sustain any loss. My name may be reproached among men, but here is a divine antidote against that, that my name is written in the Lamb's book of life, who will confess it before his Father, and before assembled men and angels. My soul may be troubled, and my mind broken, but in him I have health and tranquillity for both, for he alone giveth quietness, and when he giveth it, none can cause trouble.

My soul may be troubled, and my mind broken, but in him I have health and tranquillity for both, for he alone giveth quietness, and when he giveth it, none can cause trouble. My soul desires much, but in him is more than my soul can desire. My wants are great, and my necessities many, but in him I find an overflowing abundance that supplieth all. My situation for a time may be lonely and desolate, but in him I find the divinest company, the dearest converse, and in his presence a paradise below. Sin and sinners may cause me daily sorrow, but in him that saves from both, I have abundant consolation. The things of this world may all seem jointly to go against me, but in him the things of the next world shall all assuredly make for me. I may wander from one place of the world to another, and be persecuted hither and thither for his sake; but he, who is every where present shall be ever with me, and nothing shall be able to separate me from his love. My comforts may all fall off, like the blasted blossoms of the orchard; but in him ten thousand more noble comforts shall flourish, and never fade nor whither. Every day may bring me new disappointments (and what else should I look for in a perishing world?) but in him I shall never be disappointed, even to eternity. Here infirmity may often break off my noblest exercises; but in a little I shall put on the immortality of bliss, and rest neither day nor night in his praises, yet never be wearied. Here doubts and darkness may distress me, but in him is my direction and my light. In a word, I may be a complication of wants and adversities, crosses and calamities, disappointments and distresses, sorrow and concern; but, in a word again, whatever my exigence can demand, whatever my soul can desire, is fully, wholly, and eternally in him. Therefore, though death in a few moments may advance to put a period to my time, and cut me off from the world below, yet then shall my felicity begin, when, to sum up all my bliss, enjoying the fellowship of the world above, I shall for ever be with the Lord.

MEDITATION XCV.

The Birth-day.

Quiberon Bay, May 30, 1760.

The observation of nativities seems to be both ancient and universal, but by none more splendidly kept than those, who, not attending to the end of their creation, have but little reason to rejoice that ever they were born. Of old, a king's birth-day, in its consequences, cost our Saviour's forerunner his head; but at many such feasts now-a-days, the Saviour himself is crucified afresh, and put to open sheme.

Surely *to be* is desirable, but to be *happy* is much more so; and who can claim this, but such as remember the day of their death oftener than the day of their birth, and choose rather to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting? If joy belongs to any on their birth-day, surely it is to those, who not only know, that on such a day of the year they become one of the numerous family of mankind, but also can, by solid arguments, and on good grounds infer, that, by the second birth, they are of the family of the living God. Though Job and Jeremiah, in their anguish, cursed their day, yet when the storm passed over, their souls returned to their quiet rest, and irreprehensible joy: however, he who only waits for the manifestation of that glorious life, which has neither change nor end, may, to the praise of God, with an exulting breast, talk in an opposite strain: "Let the day prosper wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived. Let that day be brightness, let God regard it from above, and let the light shine upon it. Let light, and the beaming hope of eternal life, beautify it to me. Let serenity dwell upon it, and the brightness of the day banish every gloom from it. As for that night, let the beauty of the day be spread upon it; let it be joined and added as a remarkable day to the days of the year, and let it come chief to me among the number of my months. Lo, let that night be solemn and sweet, while my anthem imi-

iates the song above, and my soul, on wings of faith, mixes with the adoring multitude on high."

There are a variety of arguments against carnal feasting on my birth-day. Had I come into the world laughing, I might live feasting, and die rejoicing; but as I came in weeping, and breathed my first breathing in disquiet and cries, so it teaches me to live sober, and die serious. Since we are all born under the curse, why such a noisy commemoration of that day, when another sinner first burdened the earth, when another rebel against Heaven first breathed the common air? But if we are to acknowledge it as a mercy that we were born, as no doubt it is, yet it is not the way to show our gratitude to the Most High, by pampering perishing clay. God will not be praised over our cups; then his name is often blasphemed. Such a practice is consistent in an idolatrous Belshazzar and his guests, towards gods who neither see nor hear, but he who is a Spirit will be spiritually honored.

A back-look on my life, may hinder carnal mirth on its commencement. Sin and vanity twisting with every day of my life, should make me consider on my birth-day with more enlarged views than the sons of sense can take, how I have fallen from the noble end for which I was created, how I have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, I who have an immortal soul within me, that shall live to eternity.

One thing, however, I should consider, that since I came into this world, many thousands of my contemporaries have gone into the unseen world. The spreading forest of my acquaintance is fearfully thinned by the feeling axe of death. It is a chilling thought, that so many of my companions, who lately made a figure in the gay world, are now wrapt up in an eternal gloom. Many of my school-fellows and comrades, of my friends and neighbours, are now no more; yea, into my father's family, since I made one of the number, death, though not a stranger before, has made five desolating visits, besides the redoubled blows, that made me fatherless and motherless; and though, in unbounded goodness, I survive, yet all these occurrences cry to me, that I also in a little must remove, and be no more.

In this contracted span, there are not many now who reach three-score years; yet, at such a calculation, my

sun is at his height, my day arrived at noon; and shall I not yet put away the follies of youth, when I know not but my sun may go down at noon, never more to rise? Then henceforth may I be the man, yea, more, the Christian, and spend every year as my last, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord, laying hold on every opportunity to do good, observing the conduct of Providence towards me, and doubling my diligence in the duties of religion. And, as I am drawing nearer the unseen world, so by thinking the oftener on it, I should prepare the better for it. And as noon is succeeded by night, so with loins girt, and lamp burning, I should expect the evening of death, and the coming of my great Master, rather astonished that the shadows are not sooner stretched out, than surprised as being unprepared, that they are stretched out so soon.

MEDITATION XCVI.

Time past never returns.

Under sail, June 16, 1758.

FOOLISH man thinks he is born to live to himself, and that he is lord of his own time, to spend it as he pleases; but alas! he is mistaken, for he should live to God, and spend his time to his glory. How watchful, then, on a double account, should I be over my time; first, because I cannot recal it when past; I cannot bring again my childish years, or fetch back my more advanced days. Now, on the sea, I cannot recal the time I spent on land; nor, when at land again, this time I spend at sea; yea, I cannot lengthen out the miuute, or make the passing moment *lie too*, till I finish the sentence. I cannot say to time, as Joshua once did to the sun, "Stand thou still," for it is in continual progression. The sand-glass of my life pours down night and day; and though the gradual waste seems trifling, yet how soon shall the last sand be run, and not a dust left! and then there is no turning of the glass again.

Secondly, As time cannot be recalled, so the things done in time cannot be disannulled. I cannot undo my

deeds, unspeak my words, and unthink my thoughts. It would be less galling, did time fly off in a blank; but it is full of records, for as it is always on flight, so the soul is never idle, but is at work night and day, which we little think of. How would it mitigate our mournful reflections, if we could get our wicked deeds undone, and our bad actions annihilated! but still they are actions once done, and stand on record, to shew either the mercy of God when we are pardoned, or to condemn us when we are judged. I said time past never returns, and so it never does, for us to mend what we have done amiss; but mispent time is present to torment the wicked through eternity.

How cautious should I be in spending time which is so precious, and on which so much depends! The past is entirely lost, the present is on the wing, and the future is uncertain. The past is mine no more, the future never may be mine, and the present is mine but for a moment. In the time past I can do nothing, as it is already fled; in the time present I can do little, as it is on the wing; and in the time to come, as it lies concealed, I know not what I may do. So then the present breathing, this very twinkling, the single moment, and naked *now*, is mine without the least appendix of time past or to come, but in reflection on the one, and expectation of the other. The present only is mine, which, while I use, wasteth, while I possess, passeth away. In a little the angel shall lift up his hand to heaven, and swear, by him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no more. And as past time never returns, so the works I leave unfinished in time, cannot be wrought out in eternity. The foolish virgins will find no oil to buy in the other world; no acceptable repentance in the pit; no work nor device in the silent grave.

I see, then, that every moment of time is of great consequence to one on whose time eternity depends. O to spend that well which is so valuable, till acquitted in mercy at the end of time! Now, as time passes not to return, so all the things of time pass, both troubles and pleasures, never to return: but to render eternity, in all its beatific excellencies, a state of truest and sublimest happiness, it is a permanent, present, and abiding duration, an eternal *now*, that knows no after state, no futu-

rity, or succession of revolving periods. Then, may it be my happiness, that when time passes frome me, never to return, an eternity of glory, to consummate my bliss, may be present with me, never to pass away!

MEDITATION XCVII.

On ships steering different courses with the same wind.

Under sail, June 10, 1758.

It is surprising that one wind should carrry ships to the different points of the compass, even to quite opposite points; but this is owing to the setting of the sails, and steering of the helm.

And is it not more surprising, that the same wind that forwards the saints heavenward, should drive the wicked nearer hell? If the godly have the fair wind of prosperity, then, like Jacob, they confess their smallness, and that God has done all for them; or, like David, come and sit before God, and pour out the ebullitions of a grateful heart; or if the saints (which is frequently the case) are tossed with the rough wind of adversity, then they hear the rod, and who hath appointed it, turn to him that smiteth them, and see that it is good that they have been afflicted, avowing, with that eminent saint, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." But the wicked, if full, forget God, and wax wanton; if they have no changes, they fear not God; if Heaven bestows plenty on them, they consume it on their lusts; nor does adversity with them, mend the matter, for, like Ahaz, in their distress they trespass yet more against the Lord; and, like the remnant of the Jews who were mad on idolatry, that very sin for which their land was laid desolate and their temple burnt, while suffering for sin, they continue in sin. The same crucified Jesus is a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness, but the power of God, and the wisdom of God, to the true Christian. The ordinances of grace soften and improve the saints for glory, but harden and prepare the sinners for wrath. The patience of God leads the one daily to repentance, the other to presumption. The terrors of the

Lord deter the first from sinning, but drive the last to despair.

Hence they may live together in one house, enjoy the same privileges, share in the same common mercies, rest in the same tranquillity, and be partakers of the same outward comforts and happiness; or be visited with the same trials, walk under the same cross, drink of the same cup of adversity, and share the same afflictions; and yet out of both conditions the one shall extract food and medicine, the other poison and death: by either wind the one shall arrive at heaven and glory, the other at perdition and woe.

Hence may I, like the wise mariner, make the best of a contrary wind, of cross dispensations, and adverse providences, and, in spite of opposition, reach my happy port at last, having my soul brought into a submissive frame to every turn of life and crook of lot that providence may lay in my way.

MEDITATION XCVIII.

On being driven back to harbour.

Lying off France, June 17, 1758.

THERE is an unseen rotation of circumstances accidental to all conditions of life, which we cannot provide against. Had we known yesterday that we should have been driven back to-day, we had not left our station, nor undergone toil, danger, and damage. Even so, how many fruitless efforts have the sons of men made in pursuit of temporal things, where the people weary themselves for very vanity! So is his fate who sets out for happiness below; for after a thousand tackings and turnings to the empty creature for satisfaction, still the wind of vanity and vexation of spirit, which spreads over the whole universe, and blows in the face of every son of man, brings him back, with boisterous squalls, to where he first set out, to see his folly, and confess his mistake. So must the christian lay his account to meet with crosses in his course, for it is through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom. Often in the

day of darkness and tempest, the believer is apt to doubt his progress heavenward, and to think himself still in the port of a natural state; but as the seaman, that would reach his desired haven, however often he be blown back, must still put to sea again, so the Christian, whatever storms and tempests roar around him, must still endeavour to believe on his ill-sufficient Saviour, who with equal ease can save the sinner from hell as the saint from falling away.

Again, as it is safer for a ship in a storm to stand to sea, than make the shore, lest she be wrecked upon the rocks that lie along; so every disciple of Jesus is to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, is to hold fast the form of sound words, is to avoid lukewarmness, hypocrisy and defection, lest thereby he be undone for ever. Finally, whatever the seaman does, the Christian must still hold on his course through storms and tempests till he arrive at the heavenly shore.

MEDITATION XCIX.

The spirits of just men made perfect.

Lying off Normandy, June, 1758.

Many are the articles of the heavenly bliss, many are the joys of the higher house, and the sweet society and company is no small part of the happiness of the general assembly and church of the first-born. Where sobriety is fashionable, we too little esteem the saints, these excellent ones of the earth; but when we are among the blackest sons of vice, we learn to compute otherwise, and clearly see the worth of the saints. Accordingly, it is one branch of the blessedness of believers, that they shall be brought "to the spirit of just men." But, as even the godly here-away are apt to be involved in contention, debates, and strife, and to have corruption breaking out now and then in them, which has often happened among dear brethren, and in the church of Christ, to the grief of many a heart, therefore it is added, "to the spirits of just men made perfect."

Now, if the company of sinners, such as I live among, be so disagreeable, how pleasant will the fellowship of these sanctified ones be, in the presence of the great Master of the heavenly family! Here sinners are, alas! every where most numerous; but then and there, not one sinner shall stand in the great congregation, not one wicked person in the assembly of the just. And as man, being a social creature, delights in company and converse with one another (so says the proverb, "As iron sharpeneth iron, so the face of a man his friend,") will not the saints kindle in their love to God, from the love of one another, by a sacred emulation who shall love him most, who has loved them with an everlasting and unchanging love? Hence am I instructed in this world whom to choose as members of my family, even as my servants and what value to put on those who are religious, since, amidst all his failings, still "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour."

MEDITATION C.

Going to engage.

Now every thing is preparing to engage the enemy, all hands are busy; but all souls are culpably idle, though what the event may be, none can tell. Careless of our eternal interests at other times, no wonder we are careless at our last! We know not how soon we shall be in the terrors of death, as we are soon to be in the horrors of battle. How shocking to see men unusually merry, when rushing into danger more than common! To live without faith, and die without fear, is not the character of the christian, who rejoices with trembling, and knows the terrors of the Lord. How stupid never to prepare for death, which, whether prepared for or not, may soon overtake some, and in a little will overtake all of us. Probably in a few hours, some of us will be arrived at our long home; some disembodied souls stand before the awful bar! I shudder at the thought!

Our sympathising friends know nothing of our dan-

gerous situation in the contending moments, while oceans ruffled with storm and tempest rage around us, high winds and hurricanes roar above us, and the angry foes pour in death on us, with a noise terrible as the thunder, and awful as the lightning. How would our tender parents weep and wring their hands, to see us in such danger, or in the cold embrace of death!

Every thing is tossed down into the holds, that could incommode us in the engagement; so at death we would quit with all the joys of life to live a little longer, and must quit with all to die. Woe to the disputes of nations, woe to the pride of kings, that kindles this bloody uproar, and calls us all to our arms!———*But the drum!!!*——— ——— ——— ———*

MEDITATION CI.

Arguments to resignation.†

June 17, 1759.

To encourage to submission and resignation, let me consider and believe these truths, and then see if I have any cause to complain, be cast down or fear.

1. That the just Lord, who rules in the midst of his people, will do no iniquity.

2. That he loves his saints with a love more indulgent, and every way more excellent, than they can have for themselves.

3. That when he removes a comfort, or causes some of our blessings wither, like Jonah's gourd, our souls would receive greater damage by their being continued with us, than by their being cut off from us.

4. That when any affliction is sent, we would be greater loosers by going without it, than by groaning under it.

5. That whatever befals us, if we belong to God, both

* The author appears to have been interrupted by the commencement of the action.

† While the author was in the utmost parts of Europe, his nearest friend died eight days before writing the above, which he was informed of some months after in England.

his glory and our good shall thereby sooner or later be advanced.

6. That no changes in the world can alter his love towards us, in which he rests.

7. That it is not safe to have what God thinks fit to take away, or to escape what he is pleased to impose: therefore silence becomes us, whether Providence *remove our relations*, or other joys, or heap troubles on us.

8. That as God now sees, so we ourselves shall, one time or other, see and confess, that all these afflictions which befel us in the world, were highly necessary for preparing us for the everlasting kingdom.

9. That whatever affliction takes from us, or whatever bitter draught it puts into our hand, still there is enough in God to make up the loss of the one, and overcome the bitterness of the other.

10. That it is better to get afflictions with a blessing, than mercies with a curse; as Israel had their flesh in the wilderness with a vengeance, and their request granted, but leanness sent into their soul.

11. That it is not safe to contend with God, nor quarrel with the divine conduct, which cannot err.

12. That submission and resignation in all things, and at all times, to the divine disposal, is our indispensable duty.

13. That God, out of what at present seems the greatest evil, can bring the greatest good, and often turns our sorrow into singing.

14. That besides the good which accrues to us here from afflictions, they work for us, by the divine blessing, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, being convinced they are passing, but at the things which are not seen, being confident they are permanent and eternal.

MEDITATION CII.

Saints have no cause to complain.

Dec. 24, 1760.

"THOU art ever with me, and all that I have is thine," is a privilege which may compose the believer's breast in the most gloomy days, and amidst the most distressing vicissitudes of lot: for in this promise, which is sweeter than honey, and the honey-comb, the ear of faith may hear God speaking thus, "Believer, canst thou for shame look sad, or grudge the temporal happiness of any, who hast the treasures of eternity reserved for thee! Neither should it vex thee too much, that thy situation is not such as thou wouldst in a transient world, seeing thou art ever to be with me, where all my perfections shine, and all my glory beams forth." O how happy, then, are the saints of God, who may put on a cheerful countenance even in the general conflagration; and if so, how much more under a few disappointments which are sent for wise ends, and redound to their spiritual good in the issue. Invested with this celestial charter, well may we smile, though all nature frown, and triumph, though an angry world rage. By this we dwell in the sunbeam, and walk in endless light: nor need be greatly troubled at the loss of all things. But what do I say? For how can the heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, loose any thing at all? The thief only removes his stolen goods from one place to another; how, then, can he that fills heaven and earth be stolen? Ah! cruel unbelief only attempts the horrid sacrilege to steal Christ from the heart, but such a promise as this bids defiance to the monster; and while we expect its full accomplishment (nor let the time seem long) the day dawns, which ends the dark night of our sinning and suffering, and translates us to the realms of bliss, where—but eternity only can declare what it is to be with him, whose presence makes a heaven, and whose love is better than life; and what it is to enjoy all the fulness of the Godhead, as far as glorified creatures can.

MEDITATION CIII.

Approaching Fruition.

Hamoaze, Dec. 28, 1760.

STILL, my soul, in spite of all thy fears, remember that the day-spring of eternity knows its place, and will appear at the appointed time. Sin's gloomy night is far spent, and the morning drawing near, when all the thick shades will dissolve in endless light. A few revolutions will bring the longed-for day, when he shall appear without sin unto salvation. A general shout shall welcome his second coming, and united hallelujah's attend the triumphant Judge (when sin and sinners are no more) to the highest heaven, where the bliss of saints and angels is complete, without the least shadow of change. O how sweet the warblings of celestial song, how fair the beauties of eternal noon, and how divine the glories of the throne!

What must the promised land be in the eternal possession, when the account of the two faithful spies, faith and hope, backed by the divine record, is so ravishing! Creation can scarcely furnish fine enough materials for comparison, much less for our bliss itself. There gold is but the dust of our feet, pearls the gates of our city, and gems the foundations of our walls. The sun is an extinguished taper in the diviner blaze of glory. The stream and tree of life, at which we feed, continue us immortal. But all this is only the index of our happiness, for God reveals himself to every glorified saint in ways not known before, and then what transport fills the soul, what floods of pleasure rise, and deluge every power of mine! O how shall I lie dissolved in ecstacy through love's eternal day! But this abundance of joy shall not have the effect it has on earthen vessels here, to crack and crush them, but shall strengthen all my inward man, that I may praise like angels, and love like seraphim. What raptures shall arise from that intimate communion my soul shall then enjoy with God, though now my words cannot express it, and my thoughts cannot conceive of it! Then there shall not be the least remains of sin in my soul, not a wandering thought, which now at my best times trou-

bles me, nor a frown in the countenance of God, and therefore no more grief or sorrow. Then I shall fear him out of the purest love, serve him, and not be afraid; approach and come close to his throne, and yet not be accused of presumption. I shall see him, and not die, and enjoy the nearest and sweetest fellowship with him for ever, without being in danger of a wound from spiritual pride. Then will God in very deed dwell with men, and in men; and then, O how full shall my soul be of God, and how satisfied with the society of the heavenly inhabitants! God stamped on every soul, dwelling in every breast. possessing every thought, the subject of every song, and the object of all our love renders the whole celestial multitude happy, extremely and eternally happy!

MEDITATION CIV.

Infinite and eternal properties of the bliss above.

Jan. 4, 1761.

Had I but one moment's glance of the glorious, though created sun, which, while I began to gaze, were concealed, never to be seen again, such a view would only kindle an anxious curiosity, but not satisfy one longing desire; even so, a passing glympse of the celestial glory would only set on edge, but never satisfy the holy appetite of the heaven-born soul. There is an immortality in my soul, and there is an eternity in my portion. Vast are the demands of the renewed mind, such as the whole creation cannot satisfy; but in God's sacred super-abundance, in his infinite fulness, there is enough and to spare. What divine harmony in all respects takes place above! God, the enjoyment of whom is paradise and bliss, is infinite, and every faculty of the soul is capacitated, in the highest degree, to enjoy much of God; and our divine communion and fellowship also is eternal. What keeps the worldling in perpetual anguish, but because his portion here is neither complete nor permanent? Yea, what would the bliss above be, if either *infinity* or *eternity* could be separated from it? for what would avail the

possession of crowns and kingdoms, nay, of more substantial bliss, if but for a moment? and what would perpetuity itself profit, if spent but in gazing on a glow-worm, or enjoying a circumscribed good? Well, but it is otherwise here; for when wafted to the higher house, to the heaven of heavens, I shall find myself in the midst of ineffable glories, and plunged among infinite beatitudes, and all the unbounded emanations of a Deity, whose every perfection may through endless ages employ the whole multitude of glorified admirers. But while his eternal excellencies possess my ravished powers, and all his goodness passes before me, how would my infinite mind be pained that I can comprehend so little of this almighty all, if not comforted on the other hand with this, that I shall go on, and grow in knowing God through eternity! O eternity, eternity! how much shall my soul know of God before ten thousand years are spent! and yet these cannot diminish the eternal duration one moment! And, as my portion, even after all that I shall have seen, adored, and enjoyed, will remain full and overflowing, being infinite; so the time of possession, communion, and enjoyment, even after ages of bliss are elapsed, will always continue the same, being eternal.

MEDITATION CV.

Bad company.

Hamoaze, January 11, 1761.

Sometimes our situation may be solitary, our friends being cut off from us by death, or we from them by distance; or our company may be such for a while as that the safety of our souls forbids us to converse with it. It is become customary with us to complain of this, and to cry out for the communion of the saints; and indeed it must be owned, that as iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the face of a man his friend. Yet, if grace is at work to find God in every circumstance, even this prejudice may be turned into a spiritual advantage; for, alas! I may fondly meet with my friends, and freely talk with them, and yet Christ have little of the conversation, though the kind

Author of our bliss should often be the subject of our discourse; but when my company is such that I shun to sit with them, then I dwell alone, and seek after communion with God himself; and while faith gets a view of his divine love, and dazzling perfections, I can never want matter for meditation.

Thus the right improvement of a cross, which in itself is heavy and afflicting, even sojourning in Mesech with the sons of consummate folly, may produce the greatest blessing, even communion with the Most High. And, though I am not to expect a voice from heaven to carry on a dialogue with me, yet, by his spirit speaking in the scriptures, and breathing on my soul, I may converse with God, and talk of the glories of the world to come. Yea, this situation, though in itself mournful, is not barren of useful instructions; for I learn, 1. What a pleasant place the church and Zion of God is, where saints may talk together of redeeming love, till their hearts burn within them. 2. That the expectants of the better country are too shy to tell to one another what God hath done for their souls, that all may give him praise. 3. That one Christian is readier to receive hurt from the worldly and carnal discourse of another, than from the belchings of the profane; for this drives him to God, but the other, though not to his profit, gains upon him by its seeming innocence. 4. That no confusion or confinement can hinder the rightly-exercised soul from walking at large in the promise, and with God. I may have neither field nor garden to walk into, and yet walk over the fields of bliss, and take a tour through the paradise of God; my situation may, in a great measure, forbid the use of my voice in my devotions, yet I may cry and be heard in the highest heavens. 5. To admire and adore the goodness of God that turns all thing to the believer's advantage, who, when associated with men that seem incarnate devils, may entertain heavenly meditation, and maintain communion with the God of angels. 6. To put a proper estimate on the saints; to choose all the members of my family of such; and to be ready to break off other themes, and begin the divine subject among them. And, 7. To look forward to that day when the wicked shall fall off round about us, as the falling leaves from a frostbitten tree, and we shall rise to dwell among glorious angels, and

perfected saints, where we shall talk of him and to him for ever, and not a wretch break in to mar our dearest, our divinest theme.

MEDITATION CVI.

On going beyond the line.

Plymouth Sound, March 14, 1761.

COMMANDED by our Sovereign with cheerfulness we leave our native land, and pursue our course through raging and extensive oceans, to unknown climes abroad, though we may meet with enemies, be overtaken with diseases, and must pant beneath a scorching sun. Why then, O my soul! afraid at thy heavenly Sovereign's command, to pass the line of time into the wide ocean of eternity, and unknown worlds above, seeing thou hast his divine promise for thy protection in the hour of death, and the sure hope of a non-such friend before thee, who is Lord of all the unknown regions of glory?

The saint should even rejoice in the prospect of death, which turns out to his immense, his everlasting gain; for here he may have little or nothing, there is his inheritance; here he may be an exile, there he is at home; here a stranger, there among his friends; here often mourning without the sun, but there eternally with God.

One, from the large quantity of stores and provisions of all kinds which is brought aboard, might well conclude we were not designed for channel-service, but for some distant part of the world: O! then, seeing I have such a long voyage before me, and must live in worlds to come, how is my soul provided? what have I in hand, what have I in hope? have I the promise, and Christ in the promise in hand? and its full accomplishment in the full enjoyment of him in hope? Were I only to coast on the shores of time, die like the beasts, and be no more, to be unprovided would not be a crime. But to launch into eternity without the provision proper for an immortal soul, is more desperate madness than for ships to sail to the farthest Indies without bread, wood and water.

It affects me a little to go abroad, and not know if

ever I shall return to my native land, or see a friend I have in life; but faith's enlarged view shall dissipate the gloom, for the sun shines as brightly on the other side of the line as this; the stars twinkle alike richly in all quarters; and heaven, surrounding the whole globe, is alike near to all places; yea, God being every where present, he that lives in him cannot be divided from him, or die out of him, by distance from his country and his friends, but at the hour of dissolution shall go to be for ever with the Lord, where he shall be allowed the nearest approaches, and most intimate communion with him that dwells in light inaccessible and full of glory.

MEDITATION CVII.

On a popish procession to prevent the return of an earthquake.

Madeira, April 2, 1761.

Of all curses, those that are spiritual are most terrible; and none more dismal than to be given up to strong delusions to believe a lie. Do these men think that the Deity is like children, pleased with pomp, and novelty, and show? When the power of religion decayed in the soul, it came more and more into bodily exercises, which profit little, and into external forms and farces. Will a few boys creeping on their hands and feet, before you through the streets, make the heart-searching God believe you are truly humbled? do ye substitute the walking bare-footed along a stony cause-way, in the room of walking with God by faith? imagine ye to avert divine wrath by gently whipping your naked bodies? or are such touches of the flesh equal to a real sorrow for, and turning from sin? Think ye God has ceased to be a spirit, and no more demands to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, but, like the idols of old, with the fooleries of men? Are the graces of the Holy Ghost converted into bodily gestures? and can your being veiled in a mournful manner deceive him who seeth through the thick darkness? Think ye, the carrying a piece of wood, in the form of a cross,

through your city, will awe the earthquake into eternal silence? or will God look down propitious on the image of your saint and patroness which ye have made in breach of his own express command? Our blessings must come through his hands that suffered on the cross, and for his sake, but we must expect nothing from the cross itself. Of old the doctrine of the cross was foolishness to Jews and heathen Greeks; but now the cross, while its divine doctrine is dropped, is very folly among nominal Christians.

Now, if God, who has another time to judge, should in his general forbearance and common mercy, not send a second shock, how will they be persuaded of the prevalency of their procession, and thus be hardened in their superstition and delusion! O with what fervour, for it is the interest of Christ; with what constancy, for souls are precious; with what tenderness, for they are our fellow-creatures and brethren, should all the reformed churches pray for the destruction of the *man of sin*, and the fall of *Babylon*, that nations who have nothing but shadows for substance, rites for religion, and the inventions of men for the doctrines of truth, may walk in the light, and enjoy the liberty of the glorious gospel!

But shall I forget the special favour of Heaven to me? for it was not by chance that I was born in a Protestant land, but by the good will of him who hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of the habitation of every individual under the sun.

MEDITATION CVIII.

Sailing in the torrid zone.

April 11, 1761.

What extremes are found on this little ball that is hung upon nothing! Here nations tremble among mountains of ice, and deluges of snow; there kingdoms pant under a scorching sun, and breathe in a sultry air; while others (though perhaps not better pleased with their situation than the former) have but a moderate degree of either. It fares the same way with the rational world as it does

with the terrestrial globe; here some live in chilling penury, there others wanton in enfeebling luxury and wealth; while some have the golden mean, the desirable sufficiency, and yet, like the inhabitants of the temperate zone, are scarce content with their situation, or thankful for the mercies of their lot. The inhabitants of one country think that another country abounds with the plenty of the universe; but he that tries all, finds a deficiency in each. But whatever difference there be among men with respect to the bounds of their habitation, surely the whole world dwell either under Sinai's tremendous thunderings, or Zion's peaceful voice. The situation of the one is terrible, but of the other triumphant. And what is awfully surprizing, is, that though the thunders are both loud and long, yet, being asleep in sin, they hear them not, and so bless their state, till the terrors of death rouse every organ to be with the deepest anguish, attentive to the everlasting thunderings of an avenging God. But the *still small voice*, being accompanied with divine power, speaks into the very hearts of those, who by believing on the mediator of the new covenant, are come to the heavenly Mount Zion.

A warm sun, and a bright day, are big words among the northern nations, who have often a cloudy sky, a short noon, and a long cold night. So affluence and plenty are words of a big meaning to them whom poverty follows, and from whom pity flies; but it is better to struggle with losses and crosses, if so the graces of the soul be kept alive, than to lie on a bed of down, fall asleep in carnal security, and never more awake. It is dangerous to swim in hot seas, where sharks, or along shores where alligators devour; and doubly so to wallow in wealth and ease, where lusts and Satan destroy.

The European beauty would not exchange her fair face with a swarthy complexion, for all the treasures of the south; and should the Christian who is all-glorious within, choose a condition that may cast a blemish on his better part, like Jeshurun, who, when he waxed fat, kicked; and in his greatness forgot him that made him great? More venomous creatures crawl in those countries which never felt a cold day, than in such as annually feel a pinching winter. So, generally speaking, more corruptions (pride, lust, carnal security, wrath, &c.)

abound among such as are finely cloathed, and fare sumptuously every day, than among those that sit down to one meal, and know but little how to provide the next.

But again, are the distant beams (for even under the meridian line the sun is millions of miles removed from us) of a burning mountain, or a measurable world of fire, so excessively hot and scorching? then what must the wrath of the Almighty be? Though all the sky were full of scorching suns, they could convey no idea of thy terrible indignation. Who, then, can describe thy terrors, or the fierceness of thy wrath? immensity can only measure its extent, and eternity its duration; well then may it awe a finite worm into silence.———

MEDITATION CIX.

Under the direct meridian.

Lat. 0, *W. Lon.* 9, *April* 16, 1761.

Stretching towards the south, we are at last arrived at the true meridian, where our eyes need not travel through spacious skies, or journey towards the chambers of the south, to find the glorious Lord of day; seeing from the summit of the skies he shoots down his perpendicular beams, and gives the brightest day. This appearance would look strange in the northern isles, and therefore invites to some meditation. Then, as one that is always sailing to the south, though sometimes he may be overtaken with calms, or contrary winds, yet sooner or later will reach the line; so the Christian that steers his course heavenward, though he may have many heavy obstructions, from without, and from within, as the contrary winds of strong temptation, the bursting squalls of inbred corruption, and the no less dangerous calms of spiritual sloth and carnal security, shall, in spite of all, reach the meridian of glory. Indeed, the poor sailor may perish before he can come to his port; but the believer, having his anchor within the vail, though earth and hell, and remaining sin, the worst of all the three, often threaten his ruin, shall safely arrive at the haven which he desires to see, and then shall he remember the perils of his pas-

sage, and dangers of the sea, only in grateful songs to his divine Deliverer.

Never was I apparently so near the sun as now, and yet never did the sun seem so high above me: So it is with the Christian; the more he knows of God, and the nearer he is permitted to approach to his throne, God is the higher in his esteem, and the more glorious in his adoring eye, while he is the lower in his own sight, yea, ready to sink into nothing while admitted to unclouded views of the divine majesty. And this, and this only, is the desirable situation below, when the soul, in deep humility, adores the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, wholly emptied of himself, and fully replenished with God.

Again, only under the meridian can I set my face every way, and look up and see the sun, because he shines straight above my head, and all in the same latitude share the same amazing noon; so in the land of glory shall the Sun of righteousness shine in all the brightness of his uncreated beauty, into every soul, and be no more a rising, a setting, or a clouded sun, but eternally dwell in the full view of all his numerous adorers. The Deity, in his most ample revelations, in his most satisfying manifestations, shall fill all the higher house; yea, every entranced adorer sees God in one another, for seraphims and cherubims flame in his brightness; angels and archangels sing and shout in his day, and all the saints shine in his similitude. Nothing is there (for the fearful and final separation has taken place, O tremendous day!) but God and goodness, but innocence and peace, but sanctity and joy, but harmony and song, transport and delight, love and illumination.

Here our bright day has an enfeebling influence, and our high sun-beams almost insufferably hot; but there (O! shall such an one as I be ever there?) I shall bask in his noon-day beams, and share the effulgence of his inconceivable divinity, yet not dissolve into inactivity and death, but thereby be invigorated for the whole task of an eternal adorer!

Is this globe of light and ball of fire, so amazingly majestic, that heathen nations have given him divine honour as a God? then how incomprehensibly great, how ineffably glorious must Jehovah be, whose bare

word spake such a beauty into being! and is my eternal noon to be by the brightness of his presence, the emanations of his love, and the glory of his power? yea, is even Jehovah himself to be my light and day, my life and bliss, my portion and song? what then, though some few dark nights intervene, since this day is on the wing, when my views shall all be bright, because in his light I shall see light clearly? O these transporting, these transforming views, that shall for ever entertain every enquiring, enlarged faculty of soul; Henceforth let my soul dwell by faith in endless noon, till over all my shades this endless noon prevail.

MEDITATION CX.

Under the meridian, the sun and moon high.

N. Latitude 5°. 35′. *April* 19, 1761.

When the starry heavens engaged my attention in the northern climes, many of their bright inhabitants, and the moon herself, seemed low to me; but here, under the meridian, not only the sun but the moon in her proper hour possesses the summit of the sky, and the bright beauties which seemed to be in some depressed station, partake in the same exaltation. Now, is not this a lively picture of that happy and triumphant state that the militant church shall be exalted to at last? Christ is ascended up on high, not for himself (for as God he is over all blessed for ever) but as our representative, and in our name, that where he is, there we may be also; and as his Father has a seat on his throne for his beloved Son, so has the Son promised that such as overcome shall sit with him in his throne; yea, every saint shall partake of his Redeemer's glory, for if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; and if we confess him, before an abandoned world, he will also confess us before assembled men and angels.

Then, although the moon suffer an eclipse, it is not to be thought that a planet is destroyed, for she shall yet reflect many a bright beam, and, to some parts of the world, run in an elevated orbit; so it is with saints

in particular, and the church in general, they may be both low and little in the accouut of carnal men, but they are not the less noble in themselves, not of smaller account with God. The certainty of this exalted state may well support us under the deepest abasements, for because he lives, we shall live also, and every member shall rejoice with his glorified Head. What though the saints now suffer under diversified trials, like the inhabitants of the frozen north, who have only a peep of day through the whole winter, but are harassed with one burst of tempests, one covering of snow, and one field of ice; since they may look a little forward, and see themselves placed in these happy regions where their divine Sun sheds eternal noon, and makes them shine forth as stars in the kingdom of their Father!

MEDITATION CXI.

A squall of rain, lightning, and thunder.

April 20, 1761.

The other day, when the meridian sun brightened a cloudless sky with amazing effulgence, and all round about was light and beauty, I did not dream that such a tremendous night would so soon ensue. The winds blowing with amazing vigor, the disquieted ocean roaring beneath, the glaring lightnings flashing over the whole heaven, the broken clouds pouring out floods of water, and the rolling thunders echoing the majesty of the Eternal, through the conscious void, make up the awful scene. So trouble and disappointment will often break in on the most beautiful prospect of sublunary felicity, and raise a hurricane amidst the most perfect calm. Hence, we should learn, amidst the possession or expectation of any created bliss, or temporal good, to hold all we have or hope for, at the kind hand of the Sovereign Disposer of all things, of whose conduct none of his saints could ever yet complain.

Again, if the least contest among the elements, produce such dreadful effects, how terrible must the state of sinners be, who wage eternal war with heaven, and

shall have the arrows of the Almighty within them, the poison whereof drinketh up their soul!

No place or latitude can at times boast of so delightful a day, but at other times no place undergoes a more dismal night; so let churches in general, and saints in particular, stand in awe to sin, and beware of presuming on their privileges, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these; and, We have Abraham to our father; for of all people none are more severely punished than those that he has made approach nearest to him; "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your sins." Capernaum, that was lift up to heaven, is threatened to be thrust down to hell, for abusing these singular blessings; and Jerusalem, the beloved city, whither resorted the chosen tribes, where stood the holy temple, and where God was served, and manifested his glorious presence, yet for her sins, oftener than once had it done to her as it had not been done under the whole heaven.

Woe, then, a triple woe, to the poor apostate, who has once tasted of the good word of God, and has been made partaker of the Holy Ghost, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come, when he falls from God, and falls into his hands as an offended, angry, and avenging judge! Oh! with what care should he that thinks he stands, look to his ways, that he may never fall!

This heavy rain reminds me of the deluge; the fire and thunder, of Sodom's overthrow. The first shews me how the old world perished, the last how this world shall be destroyed. The bellowing wind proclaims shipwreck to the sailor, and the sudden squall bids me be always ready for the worst event, and the whole scene summed up together, preaches to me the goodness, the power, and providence of God.

MEDITATION CXII.

Emulation.

S. Latitude 16°. *W. Longitude* 26°. *May* 10, 1761.

It was a saying of Moses, the man of God, when one told him that two men prophesied in the camp, "Enviest thou for my sake? would to God all the Lord's people were prophets." The holy man took it not amiss that others had of the same spirit he had, to perform the same functions, and shine in the same character. What a shame is it, then, that the saints and sons of God should envy one another for the excellencies of their gifts and graces! If God he greatly glorified by any, should I be greatly displeased that it is not by me? shall I contend with God about his distribution of blessings, and begrudge his liberality to any more than myself? Does one minister darken another in preaching, or one saint excel another in prayer? who of Christ's servants can be darkened if their Master shine? or who of his saints will not bless him for his goodness to others as well as to themselves?

It is as base to be peevish because of the excellencies of others, as to be proud of our own. Our great, our universal struggle should be to set up God on high, and our great joy should be to see him set on high, whoever be the happy instrument. Ah, how base to bow the ear to vulgar applause, and listen to, or lust after, empty fame! In the natural body, is the one hand affronted that the other hand wears the signet or the ring? and among David's worthies, were the thirty chagrined that they did not attain to the first three? then why should saints and the servants of God, envy for one another's sake! Surely, it is rare to have singular gifts and graces, and not know of it; and it is almost impossible to know it, and not be puffed up in a greater or less degree. O what a degree of humility should the spiritual worthy pray for, lest at any time he be puffed up! Should the servant of Jesus take it ill that hearers flock more after others than himself, seeing it is, at least should be, still Christ they are running after? can it vex him, if he speak in sincerity, because some are masters of more eloquence than he?

O for that noble disposition of minding the things of others as well as mine own, and blessing God with cheerfulness for the singular gifts of others whereby he is glorified, which should be my whole aim, as well as for mine own! Let others excel in setting thee up on high, though thou shouldst always refuse my service. Let the spiritual temple be built, though I should never lay one stone in the edifice. Give liberally, very liberally, to all thy saints and servants, and mine eye shall never be evil because thine is good. It is enough to be a cup in thy house, though others be bowls and flaggons. Surely the loyal subject will give his joyful acclamation at the coronation of his king, though not permitted to place the crown on his head, or perform any of the ceremonies. Is there any dissonance among the stars (nor should there be among the saints) because one star excelleth another in glory?

Such and such gifts, or such and such degrees in these gifts, which I emulate for, might hurt me. Fire may be kept in a brasen vessel, which would burn a wooden one. Boiling water might crack a glass bottle, but not a stone bowl: so these qualifications which I think would make me all vigour and spirit, might hurt my spirit in more spiritual things. Few, like Moses, could carry a command so vastly great, with a vastly greater meekness; or have the humility to cover his face when it shines, and reflect the glory God-ward. Though I could pray like an apostle, and speak like an angel, yet, if the least pride spring from the performance, it were better to speak like a babbler, and pray like a babe in grace. I should press after grace continually, and grace in the highest degree, without which the noblest gifts will be but sound and smoke, without heat; while the weakest gifts, with true grace, may edify both myself and others. I should rest satisfied in the all-wise disposal of Providence, who giveth to all as he pleaseth, since, though there be diversities of gifts, it is the same Spirit who knows best how to divide, and to whom; and if God be exalted, though I should exert myself, and would choose to excel, yet I should not take it amiss, that in that excellent work every one excels me, and out-does my utmost. Finally, though my capacity may be weak, and my faculties shallow, yet hereby may all my wants be made up, if I be

rich in faith, to draw out of his fulness for my exigence; in humility and gratitude, to disclaim any thing in myself, and give him all the praise; and in love to God, to pour out my whole soul on him, while he kindly dwells in my heart, and replenishes every power with his presence.

MEDITATION CXIII.

Birth-Day.

S. Latitude 26°, *May* 30, 1761.

When I dropped some thoughts last birth-day, I was uncertain that I should see another, but now may be quite certain that this day I shall never see again; therefore I am another year nearer to the unseen world, were my years never so many. Surely my years, like figures in arithmetic, rise in their value as their numbers increase, and the last redoubles the whole. Why? so much experience of the vanity of all things, so many providences ever working for me, such fatherly chastisements, such rich displays of grace, such divine admonitions, so many tender mercies, and such sweet, sweet outlettings of love, leaves a heavy charge at my door, if I walk not answerably to them all.

Though I am still alive, and O that I could live to him in whom I live, yet several families both of my friends and acquaintance have wept and wrung their hands for their expiring friends, in the short period of a year; and O how soon must I feel the mortal dart fixed in my heart, and every sickening pulse proclaim the approach of my last moments!

Then only thus shall I be before-hand with my wasting years, and get my heart fenced against the terrors of death, by having my life hid with Christ in God, and my conversation in heaven: so should I antedate my future happiness, begin eternity in time, and, like Enoch, walking with God, would get my soul filled with such an ardent flame of heavenly love, that I would have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with him. What a happy state were this; for death would drop his sting, the grave would

cease to gloom, and awful eternity excite a song of triumph! Thus, while unprepared mortals tremble at the thoughts of death, I, longing for perfect freedom from sin, and eternal communion with God, in a kind of holy impatience, would cry out, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?

MEDITATION CXIV.

Though we walk on earth, our conversation should be in heaven.

S. Latitude 10°, *July* 7, 1761.

The way-faring man has little on the fatiguing road but his weary feet; his heart being set on his family, his friends, his home; his affections on his native country, and his desires terminating on his journey's end. Then, am not I a traveller heaven-ward, a pilgrim, and a sojourner on earth? What then have I here, or whom have I here, to captivate my affections, and hinder them from being set on high? If I have any treasure, it must be in heaven, for nothing on earth is worthy of the name, seeing all terrene things take wings, and fly away; or if they remain, it is but to be consumed in the general conflagration. Nothing sure of mine should dwell in this world, but the body of my mortality. My inner man should be an inhabitant of the better country: and it is highly reasonable it should be so, for my hope, my joy, my all are there. 1. The Father of my spirit is there, the beloved of my soul, and the husband of mine espousals; the sanctifier of mine affections, and the kindler of my love, is there. 2. All my friends in a spiritual respect are there, even the whole family of my heavenly Father, angels, arch-angels, cherubims, seraphims, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Who would not then dwell in such an assembly, and love such a divine society? 3. My house and home are there, and it must be an estranged heart indeed that never thinks on his own house, and never longs for home. 4. Mine inheritance is there, and a goodly portion it is, and pleasant lines they are, that are fallen to me. The heirs of this world only farm from fa-

ther to son, and death determines the lease; but there every one inherits for himself, and that for eternity. 5. The objects of my faith, the subjects of my song, and the darling excellencies of my love, are all there; and what soul would not dwell among such divine delights, walk in such a paradise, and breathe in the very air of sanctity and bliss?

O what a loss do I sustain by my ignorance of the divine life, and by the carnality of my mind! But is such an happiness attainable below? Yes; the Christian even here, may have his conversation in heaven, or (as the word signifies) his civil life. Then, 1. He that lives a civil life any where, must buy and sell, and do business with the men of his place; so may I in heaven even buy the merchandise of bliss without money, and without price; and carry on the noblest business with the highest One in the most interesting concerns of my soul. 2. Where one lives he necessarily walks and talks, eats and drinks, sleeps and wakes; so may my soul by faith walk over the fields of light, and talk with the Author of my bliss, the fountain of my joy, and the centre of my love: there I may eat of the hidden manna, pluck off the drop-ripe apples of the tree of life, and drink of those rivers of pleasures that eternally overflow in his presence; yea, and fall asleep amidst the numerous beatitudes above, and awake with God in the morning.

Now, as one travelling home, only attends to his journey, and provides his *viaticum*, his food for the way; (nor would his friend greatly oblige him that would load him with golden dust, or silver ore;) so a few of the necessaries of life are sufficient for my support, till I arrive at that better life that shall need no such assistance.

Then, seeing my house, my home, my friends, my bliss, my joy, mine inheritance, my crown, my life, my light, my glory, my Saviour, my God, are all on high, and nothing here but a waste and howling wilderness, through which I travel with danger and dismay; thither let my longings tend, my wishes wing, and there let my desires center, my affections be fixed, and my whole soul dwell, that at death nothing may remain but to quit this house of clay, and at once be a free and immortal citizen of the Jerusalem above.

MEDITATION CXV.

Great love in God, that we may love God.

N. Latitude 0°, 18′, *July* 19, 1761.

O HOW ardently would I love thee, who art amiableness itself! Fain would I have my heart filled with divine breathings after thee, who art all beauty and desires! but, alas! I know not what it is to love thee, which is the highest attainment of the first born sons of light, and the best exercise of the brightest seraphs. I have heard a soul-warming fame of thy likeness in thy saints, and thy similitude being put on the spirits of thy people; and where it is most perfect, it gives them such a celestial tincture, such an heavenly hue, that they are like angels dwelling among men, or saints whose conversation is already in heaven. But woe's me! my ignorance, my ignorance! I know not thee, and how can I know thy likeness! alas! my chains are heavy and my wings are weak; my affections sensual, and my spiritual desires languid. Yet I have some blinks amidst my blasts, some sun-shine and serenity in my winter: and though I cannot love thee as I would, yet I am filled with longing after some of this divine flame of love, that shall turn all the out-goings of my soul God-ward, and turn the world, in all its beguiling and bewitching vanities, eternally out of doors. O that I knew *where*, *how*, and in *what* I might love thee! May I love thee any where, and every where! at home or abroad, on sea or land, among friends or foes, among men or devils, among saints or sinners, in life or death, in time or in eternity! But again, how or after what manner may I love thee? May I delight myself in thee, meditate on thee, walk before thee, imitate thy divine perfections, talk of thy glory, mention thy righteousness, recount thy mercies, and sing aloud of thy love! may I praise thee, pray to thee, plead with thee, depend upon thee, and roll myself wholly over on thee! But again, in what may I love thee? May I love thee in thy son and in thyself, in the unity of Godhead, and in the trinity of persons, in thy perfections and attributes, in the largeness of thy love, and in the bright-

ness of thy glory! May I love thee in thy angels, in thy saints, and in all thy other creatures! May I love thee in thy power and in thy providence, in thy counsel and in thy conduct, in thy chastisements and in thy comforts, in thy favours and in thy frowns, when thou woundest or makest whole, when thou givest and when thou takest away; in a word, in all thy secret decrees, and in all thy open dispensations! May I love thee in thy gospel, and in thine ordinances, in thy law and in thy testimonies, in thy scriptures and in thy sacraments, in thy promises and in their performance, in thy saints, in thy servants, and even in mine own soul (O to see thee, O to know thee there!) and in thy grace, and in thy glory! Again, may I love thee at all times and all seasons, in youth or in old age, in my family or in the field, in company or alone, lying down or rising up, going out or coming in, in health or sickness, in wealth or in poverty, in a prison or in a palace, in reproach or applause, in the body or among the spirits of just men made perfect!

O astonishing condescension! that one under so many deformities and deficiencies, may love continually so great a Being in all his glorious excellencies! Will a king accept of the love of a subject, especially if loaded with infamy and reproach, reduced to poverty, and languishing on a sick bed? and yet, though poor, reproached, and infirm, God despises not my love, but welcomes even its few ascending sparks. O! then what a field of love, is this, God looking out at so many windows, shining in so many excellencies, and still calling, Son, give me thy heart; soul, give me thy love! O what must that love be that prevails in the higher house, in the highest heavens! Oh! were my soul dipt in the celestial Jordan, I should be cleansed from the leprosy of earthly-mindedness, and carnal affections, which always renders the persons infected, unclean, and incapable of holding communion with the Most High.

O dearest Lord! thou hast blown up a spark in my breast, that lives in spite of all the waters of corruption; cherish and increase this fire, till in the day of eternity it break forth into a spotless flame. And then (O could I antedate that day!) I shall even be refreshed with the perfection of my love, when I find it so spotless, vig-

rous, and divine, that not only I, but God, its glorious fountain, and eternal object, shall be pleased with my love: when its quality shall be suitable to that state of consummate perfection, its quantity such as replenishes the most enlarged powers of glorified souls, and its duration through all evermore.

Now, since thou art seen in all things, and canst not but be loved wherever thou art seen, how is it that I am not wholly taken up with thy love, and lost in transport and delight, in the divine survey of thine excellencies? Can a poor soul like mine not find sufficient matter for meditation, where a whole heaven of perfected adorers find enough of their most enlarged capacities through eternity, and to spare?

Now, here is the wonder, that God is not only lovely in himself, and in all things whereby he reveals himself, but also permits, yea, commands me to love him, making my indispensable duty my daily privilege, and my highest privilege my daily duty.

All subjects may and ought to reverence and love their sovereigns, but some countries not only forbid, but make it penal, for any of the fair sex, though nobly born, to be espoused to their prince, and so of course forbid them to love him in the highest degree. But, O the condescension of the high and lofty One, the chiefest among ten thousand, that I may love him, and not be reproved, and kiss him, and not be despised! As he is the greatest, so is he the most generous of lovers, not only ever returning love for love, but for a spark returning a flame, and for a faint wish, some full expressions of captivating love; and as he is a noble, a none-such lover, so he does all things answerable to this divine character. His decrees are love: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love;" his counsels are love, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold;" his cords are love, wherewith he draws; his rod is love, with which he corrects, for "whom he loves he chastens;" his providences are pregnant with love; his promises are pure love; his name is love; his officers are love, for to teach and instruct, to plead and intercede, to lead, rule, and defend, to help and heal, to counsel and comfort, are certainly offices of love; his relations are love, a kinsman Redeemer, a friend, a brother, a father, an husband, are kindly names, and full of affection, especially in him;

his banquet is a feast of love; his banner is a banner of love; his chariot is paved with love; and he himself is altogether lovely. May I, then, love such an amiable one with all the vigour of divine affection, and not be deemed audacious! May I claim the darling of heaven as mine, and maintain, with all the warmth of immortal love, "This is my Beloved, and this is my friend," and not be accounted an offender amongst all the enamoured adorers of the higher house!

But, O where shall I find, or whence fetch, a love worthy to be bestowed on this lover, who hath not his like on earth, or in heaven? O could I love thee like thy saints in the day of their espousals, glow like angels in their celestial ardors, and burn like seraphs in their deathless flames! O strange! may a worm of yesterday's production love the mighty One of eternity? may a daily sinner presume to be a daily lover of him whose name is holy? may dust and ashes not only talk, but carry on a communication, an interchange of love, with the Father of spirits? Yes; for thou not only allowest me to love thee, but to know that I am loved of thee in an infinitely higher manner than I can love thee. Thine is the ocean, mine a drop from thy fulness; thine is the sun, mine a spark kindled in thy beams; thine is the eternal emanation of sovereign good-will, mine the reflection of heaven-born gratitude, for I love thee, because thou first lovedst me; and as thou wast first, so art thou highest in thy love. It was much for thy saints, yea was it not enough for them, and more than enough for me, to be loved like thine angels, archangels, thy seraphs, and all thy bright armies of light? yet thou hast loved them with a love above that; for in that matchless prayer (John xvii.) pleading for the perfection of his spiritual seed, through union to him, the divine Redeemer says, "That the world may know," (and let all the world know it, repeats a ransomed worm) "that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me!"

What a wonderful love is this! but what a worthless lover am I! O happy, thrice happy heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ! whom he invites to a seat with him on his throne! Surely, under a sense of so much love, and yet power to love so little, I should die, did I not wait for my removal to the region of love, where my

powers of mind, enlarged and strengthened for the transports of eternity, shall be wholly exercised in love. O that divine freedom I wait for, that glorious liberty of immortal lovers that I pant after, where mine eye shall be all intuition of his glories, and mine ear all attention to the account of his excellencies! Surely, my song and soul shall be full of love to him! Yea, nothing but love, centering on him, and singing of him, with the highest degree of ardor, shall employ my every power for ever. And here, dear Lord, while I walk on the dark mountains, let it be regarded as a kind of love to think (since I cannot love thee as I should and would) how perfectly I shall love thee in those blissful regions, in those days of future glory, and in thy heavenly presence; with what fresh ardour, and unknown delight, I shall adore the God of love, who is not only lovely altogether, but teems out full floods of love on the emmets of creation, and welcomes the trifling returns of love from the atoms of his footstool.

MEDITATION CXVI.

Providence to be approved of.

Portsmouth Harbour, Oct. 31, 1761.

NOTHING is harder to attain to, than an entire resignation to the disposal of Providence; and in this very thing I condemn myself. But, O how absurd to quarrel with Heaven about one individual, if pleased with his conduct towards the totality of beings! Did I ever wish a reason why God sends his Gabriel on this or that message, and not some other of the bright armies of bliss? Durst I ever find fault with the immense distance of the stars or the huge magnitude of the sun? Did it ever give me uneasiness, though the Ottoman empire was a scene of revolutions, or a field of blood, or though nations nearer home underwent changes and war? But if any trying providences come home, I am up, if not in arms, yet in astonishment at heaven, and wonder why God deals so and so! Now, God's right over, and propriety in me, is as full and sovereign as over any other of his crea-

tures; and so should I be as well pleased with what he carves out for me, as I am with what he does for others. I never complained of the age of the world in which I was born (nay, but have blessed God for it;) and why should I, of the time of life that this or that event concerning me takes place? I pant after some things which in themselves are good, but God postpones them, as I think; but the truth is, the proper time of God's giving, and my receiving, is not come; and yet in the greatness of my folly, I grow impatient, like the husbandman, that for an early harvest, reaps corn not fully ripe.

Now, my will shall be swallowed up in thine, since I am more thy property than mine own. And as I would not direct Omniscience how to dispose of his armies of light, so will I never tell him how to deal with the inhabitants of his earth, though I make one of the number. Yet, O Most High! as thou wilt be inquired of by the seed of Jacob for these free mercies which thou wilt bestow, and even importuned (as once by wrestling Jacob) for blessings, and the performance of thy promises; so I implore thy divine interposition in my behalf, if it be thy holy will, and that thou wouldst bring me again to the place of the soles of thy feet, that I may hear blessings instead of blasphemy, and see thee in thy glory in thine own courts. O let mine absent moments from Zion be numbered up, and finished; my wanderings counted, and completed; my company changed, and my song be to the God of my mercy in the courts of his holiness; and make me yet see some of the days of the Son of man, in commemorating the sufferings and death of my divine Redeemer; in thy tender mercy, hear, help, and give an answer of peace.

But, Lord, if thou shalt (and for thy glory I would fain live) be more glorified in my resignation to thy holy will, and my remaining in the state I am in, than in my possessing all those things I long after, I roll myself over on thee, and to thy disposal say, Amen.

MEDITATION CXVII.

Bright views and bold language above.

Under sail for Lisbon, Nov. 29, 1761.

OFTEN at the description of divine things, by a masterly pen, or a truly poetical genius, I have been astonished, and admired the enlarged views of those, and their sublime thoughts, who, like myself, but dwelt in clay. Then said I, What must the songs of the new Jerusalem be, when a stanza or two, wrote by a poor mortal, labouring with corruption, and bewailing his ignorance of sacred things, yields so much pleasure and delight!

I shall, then, for a moment, suppose myself arrived at the regions of glory, and welcomed by the King eternal to the upper world: But how am I at once transported with the harmony of bliss, while I am indulged to look into the library of heaven, and read all the essays of eternity itself! First, then, a celestial canto spreads before me, whose majestic style astonishes, whose soft and flowing numbers ravish, which was sung by the morning-stars together, by all the sons of God, when the earth was created. And next, an inimitable song, composed by the first bards of light, and sung by part of the celestial choir, when the son of God condescended to be born. Then a triumphant anthem, sung and echoed round the whole court of heaven by all the hosts of light, when the Son of God ascended conqueror over all his foes, and sat down on high at the right hand of God. But the most amazing and inimitable piece, for abundance of subject, for excellency of matter, for beauty of expression, for ardency of love, for intimacy of communion, and for refined and exalted thought, is the divine epithalamium, which, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, when the whole family of heaven is assembled to divide no more, shall be sung by every guest at the feast of love, at the table of bliss. Besides these, here are some reviving hymns, composed by angels rejoicing over repenting sinners. What exalted joy sparkles in that angelic composition over a penitent Manasses, and every returning prodigal! Gabriel, in this matchless ode, sings of the eter-

nity of God, in such strains as would astonish all the bards of time;—in that, Raphael dwells on the trinity of persons; while Michael celebrates the majesty and power of the Eternal, with such energy of thought as would darken the brightest wits the world ever saw. In another, a mighty seraph sings inimitably of sacred love, and all heaven echoes amen to his divine encomium. Yea, now every saint is a poet, every believer a bard; and O how sweet are the songs of the higher temple! how soft the harmony of eternal day! What hallelujahs rise from the angels of God! what hosannas from the church of the first born! What concord and symphony are in the songs above! how dark, compared to these, were the brightest descriptions of God I ever heard below! how dull my former ardours to those which now I feel! How faint and languid my love to what now kindles in my breast! Here is the refined expression, here the noble idea, here the exalted turn of thought, here the true sublime of divine poetry, and here the enlarged, the naked view of divine things, of heavenly glories, to embolden and enliven every song. Here we talk of God at his throne, and while we commend him, we behold the beauties of his face; while we exalt him, we enjoy him, and so can never cease extolling him.

But, alas! my dark views of future things convince me that I am still in the body. Yet great things I may expect in that state of perfection. And though now I connot serve God, nor sing to God, as I would, and as I should, yet there is a day on the wing when I shall join the anthem of love, and, being loosed from all my present fetters, shall sing through eternity with the bards of paradise, "To him that loved us, that died for us, that rose again, and reigns on high, be honor and might, power and dominion, blessing and glory, for ever and ever, Amen."

MEDITATION CXVIII.

Declining Years.

River Tagus, at Lisbon, December 26, 1761.

HITHERTO I have looked upon myself as young, and coming to my best; but henceforth I shall consider myself as in my declining years. I am certain how long I have lived in the world, but quite uncertain how soon I must leave the world; and therefore should be preparing for my final departure, and daily be ripening for the regions of bliss.

Nothing would be a more forbidding prospect, than the verdure of spring to cloathe the fields in harvest; but nothing more pleasant, than to see maturity keep pace with the approach of autumn. So should I grow daily riper for the great harvest, as the time of ingathering draws daily nearer and nearer. Leaves are pleasant in the infant orchard, but fruits are expected from the full grown trees:—So in the young converts, the breathings of grace are sweet; but aged saints are expected to abound in fruits of righteousness. My love, like Ezekiel's holy waters, the longer it runs, should rise the higher, and spread the wider, till lost in its divine ocean above. The longer we live with our friends, we grow better acquainted, more intimate with, and fonder of them; so the longer I enjoy communion with God, the more ardently should I breathe after uninterrupted communion with him. As my years decline, and my outward man wastes away, so should my graces bloom, and my inner man grow strong; and when it is almost dark night with my life, it should be bright noon with my expectations. O how pleasant is it, that the longer I live in the world, I rise the nigher to heaven! If I make progress in my spiritual pilgrimage, I will daily lose sight of the world and all its vanities, which is the wilderness I travel from, and will daily see more of the tops of the heavenly mountains, of the towers of the New Jerusalem, toward which I travel. A state of grace is a glorious condition at all times; but a growth in grace is a sweet proof and heavenly consequence of being in a state of grace. My affections should

be more and more loosed from the creature, while the pins of my earthly tabernacle are loosening every day. I should at all times have my conversatiou in heaven, but especially when walking with one foot in the grave.

Now, though the period of three-score years seems far distant, yet, as there is not an hour of the day of life but the sun goes down at, so I should just walk as under a setting sun, seeing upon thousands at my age the shadows of an everlasting evening have fallen, who had as many pretensions to longevity as I. My walking with God will not shorten my span, but brighten my noon, and make my sun set with all the sweetness of a cloudless evening. Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and, in a manner, begun heaven upon earth so that he grew immortal, and ascended deathless to the very throne. O how pleasant is it to feed on the fruits of Paradise, while entering into the land of promise, and as it were, to be naturalized in the world of spirits, ere I go to dwell for ever there. A grey head, and a carnal worldly heart, is a wounding sight; but a young man, and an aged love, one in his prime, and all his graces flourishing, is comely to behold. Henceforth, be gone bewitching vanities, and all the enchantments of the world! the evening of my life is not to be trifled away with you. Death attends me, the grave awaits me, and eternity is at hand; therefore, may my purified affections, river-like, enlarge as they approach the ocean; and on the wings of faith and love, may I often fly to the hills of spices, where thy glories shed their beams. May I walk in the liberty of spiritual meditation in the land of bliss, that so death, when it comes, may have no more to do than lay my slumbering ashes in the silent grave, and let my soul remain a free inhabitant in her blessed abode.

MEDITATION CXIX.

The expected change.

Jan. 10, 1762, *Lisbon River.*

WHATEVER horrors may beset the carnal and secure, when their gloomy moments come on apace, yet no prospect affords me equal pleasure to that of my last change;

and I have exceeding great cause to rejoice, when I compare what I now *am* and *suffer*, with what I shall then *enjoy* and *be*. Now my joys are mostly future, and in expectation, for I walk by faith, and live on hope; but then they shall be present, and in possession, for I shall dwell in light, and feed on fruition. Now I am daily struggling with death and sin, but then I shall eternally triumph over both. Now I toil along a tiresome road, but then I shall walk above these skies in the very heavens. Now mine eyes rove from vanity to vanity; but then they shall see, yea, fix on the King in his glory, on the King of kings in his divinest glory. Now I dwell among firebrands, and surrounding sinners daily give me pain; but then I shall dwell among the armies of redeeming love, see angels and archangels increase the throng, cherubims and seraphims join the song, and not one sinner among all the hosts of light. Now I bewail myself often as a frail inhabitant of feeble clay; but then I shall find myself possessed of all the vigour of immortality, of all the briskness of eternal life. Now I am often puzzled about the providences of my lot; but then I shall approve, and see a divine beauty shining through the whole conduct of providence, in the light of glory. Now, in the noblest subjects my ignorance often leaves me greatly in the dark; but then shall I know, and that even as I am known. Now I have foes without and foes within, the sin of my nature, and the idols of my heart, enemies from earth and hell to grapple with; but then, triumphing over every foe, I shall sing the conquest of the Captain of my salvation, the victories of the divine Conqueror, and never cease from this interesting, this unexhausted theme. Now sometimes, from the precious ordinances and sacred courts of God I am debarred for a time; but then shall I be a pillar in the temple of God, and go no more out, but always worship at his throne. Now the cruel hand of death comes among my friends and familiars, and leaves me like a sparrow on the house-top alone, or a pelican in the wilderness mourning; but then not one of all the numerous inhabitants shall so much as say, "I am sick," because they are an assembly of sinless ones. My Sun often conceals himself, so that I go mourning without him; but then in the light of his countenance, in the brightness of his glory, shall I walk on for

ever. Now I am crawling along the road of life in company with fellow-worms, who dwell in cottages of clay, and are crushed before the moth; but then, dignified with his divine similitude, I shall dwell with the Ancient of days, and enjoy the dearest and most intimate communion with Jehovah and the Lamb for ever. Now my time is wasting away, and I am not far, yea, for aught I know, am very near my latter end: but then an endless eternity shall be mine, and my bliss be as durable as desirable, as permanent as pleasant. O! then, who would not prepare and wait for a change that is so pregnant with glory and bliss?

MEDITATION CXX.

Arguments for faith in God.

Jan. 22, 1762. Under sail for England.

The noblest way to glorify God, is to be strong in the faith, like Abraham, the friend of God: and as this confers most honour on the divine Promiser, so it conveys the greatest quietness to the soul. But, as I am more fearful than many of the faithful, and cannot attain to that confidence in God that the most part of believers have, let me strengthen my faith by the scriptures of truth, which can never be broken.

First, then, these sacred records hold out a chain of the nearest and dearest relations between God and the happy soul that has an interest in him. He is a Judge, the Judge of all the earth; and can I dread wrong judgments at his hand? He is the orphan's stay, the strength of the poor, and the stranger's shield; what then may not the orphan, the poor, and the stranger expect from him?

Again, he is a Father; and what may not I expect from such a Father, who in the tenderest manner has said again and again, "Son, all that I have is thine;"—a Father, who has heaven and earth at his disposal, and the hearts of all men in his hand—a Father, whose divine affection infinitely exceeds that of the best of the name to his most engaging son, or of the most loving mother

to her most amiable babe ;—a Father, whose wisdom knows infinitely well both what and when to give ; whose eyes and ears are continually open to their calamities and complaints ; whose love waits to bestow, and is, as it were, impatient to be gracious : whose promise is no dead word, but living, and pregnant with good ;—a Father, who has given the most amazing instance of love, in that he kept not back his Son, but delivered him up for us all ; and if he gives me his salvation, gives me the graces of his Spirit, promises me his heaven and his glory, in a word, gives me himself, what will he with-hold, what will he deny ?

Surely, I have hitherto had too mean thoughts of the goodness of God, and looked on the promises as only fair words, when they are very faithfulness and truth ; yet I may assure myself with as much certainty as the sun is in the heavens, that all the promises of God shall have their full, their perfect, their complete accomplishment toward me, and at the time that is most proper in the eye of Infinite Wisdom. Henceforth no doubt shall disturb my breast ; I will patiently wait on the Lord, who not only promises great things, but performs whatever he promises ; knowing assuredly that though now I too much imitate murmuring Israel in the wilderness, yet, like them, when I arrive at the land of promise, the Canaan above, I shall profess before the whole assembly of bliss, that there hath not failed any good thing whereof the Lord had spoken or given promise—all is come to pass.

MEDITATION CXXI.

The traveller at home.

September 7, 1776.

These many years have I dwelt in my native country, and in mine own house. Through the perils of war, the dangers of the sea, extremity of cold in one part, and scorching heat in another, have my life and health been preserved, to my own surprise, while numbers saw their native land no more. But, as a traveller, what have I seen ? Just sin and vanity in every land, grief and pain

in every breast, the fruits of the fall, and the havoc of the curse in all nations.

I dwell in mine own house, and bless the bounty of Providence, which, from floating on a restless ocean, has given me a settled habitation. But I look forward, and see that I have a long, an interesting, an awful journey before me, not from one kingdom to another, but from one world to another. Hence (not forgetful of all his mercies that prevented me in all my wanderings) to lay up my treasure in the better country, to prepare for my approaching change, to improve for my future society, and to ripen for heaven and glory, shall employ the remainder of my life, that I may finish my course with joy. *Amen.*

CONVERSE

WITH THE

WORLD UNSEEN.

CONVERSE

WITH THE

WORLD UNSEEN.

Future Glory.

Oct. 1763.

WHEN, some years ago, I left my native country for another land, my thoughts went before me; and when I foresaw, that, in the course of providence I should cross the glowing Equinoctial, still my thoughts got the start of me, and were, as it were, acquainted in the place ere my arrival there. Since, then, I am on my journey towards eternity, and the world unseen, why is not my meditation there? Shall the howling desart, through which I haste, engross my attention, when paradise is before me?

Tell me, ye inhabitants of bliss, how you employ yourselves, ye who have bid everlasting farewell to all created things? "Oh! man, thy question moves our pity, and proves that thou dwellest in thick darkness. Couldst thou thrust thy head through these heavens, and get one glance of the glory we dwell in, of the divine person we adore, thou wouldst never move the question again, but ardently long to come up hither, and account the conquest of a kingdom like the childish acquisition of a feather or a fly; thou wouldst turn the world out of thy mind, and trample on its noblest things with a disdain becoming an expectant of glory."

My divine Redeemer, I see, then, that in thy presence

there is fullness of joy, and that at thy right hand are pleasures evermore. Too long the things of time have gained on my esteem; too long have I been enamoured with creature-charms, and mistaken the chief good; henceforth will I dwell in that world, where in a little I shall dwell for ever. The more I meditate on divine things, the more I love them, and find the greater delight in my meditations; but the less my thoughts are on them, alas! the less do I esteem them. Ah! hitherto how have I refused and fled the purest felicity, and followed after vanity and pain!

II.—*On want of Divine Love.*

Bleed, my heart! and be pained, my inmost soul! at the irreverence that too often troubles me in my devotion, and defiles my best duties. O ye sons of light! I see you stand at the eternal throne, and worship, with profoundest awe and reverence, the Almighty. Yes, ye angelic throng! though your countenance sparkles with glory, yet, before the *Ancient of Days*, ye hide your faces with your wings, drop your greatness in his effulgent Majesty, and lose your beauty in his diviner beams. There the mighty *Gabriel* is a celestial *worm;* and all the seraphic *principalities* are *insects* round the throne!

What, then, must I be before the High and Lofty One who alone inhabits eternity? I who dwell in clay, am crushed before the moth, clouded with ignorance, defiled by sin, dogged by death, pleased with phantoms, and charmed with gilded nothings! The language I write in, cannot afford words to describe my vileness; metaphors fall short, and fruitful fancy toils in vain: Then let me think, and debase myself even unto hell.

O tremendous gulph: where am I now! Ye fallen hosts! ye infernal throng! you I resemble in my irreverence towards God. Oh, horrid! shall I be like these grinning spectres, these eldest sons of sin and death? *Out of the belly of hell will I cry unto thee:* yet thou hast my heart, thou hast my love, and I will worship at thy throne prostrate on the humble ground.

O ye happy assembly on the heavenly mount, the mount of God! could I think like you, could I know like

you, could my whole soul be wrapt up in adoration and divine attention to the sweet employ, what delight would diffuse through all my powers of mind in my happiest moments!

What cause have I to fear lest thy burning thunderbolts break on my irreverent head, and dash the daring wretch out of thy gracious presence into perdition and woe? But be thou exalted in thy condescension to my state, in thy pity to my frame, and let thy patience and forbearance swell my grateful anthem, while I long for that perfect state, wherein, though blessed with the nearest approaches, I shall always be filled with the profoundest respect, and divinest awe, and not one improper thought of God shall pass my breast.

III.—*We grope in the dark while here below.*

Ye heirs of endless rest! ye know no more the anxious thought, the troubled breast; your cares are past, and your concerns have come to an happy end, while this day I wait the doubtful issue of some grand affairs which very much concern my passing life. Not a cloud is in your sky, not a doubt is in your mind, while I dwell in the stormy twilight, and fear a tempestuous night. O ye shining ones! is it possible, that ever, like me, ye dwelt in the vale of Achor? were ye not born in the better country ye now inhabit? Were ever these composed countenances disfigured with sorrow, or did the briny tear ere trickle from these sparkling eyes?

"Yes, mistaken man! we all, and every one of us, came out of great tribulation; not an inhabitant of the Canaan above, but longer or shorter travelled through the wilderness below. We lost our sorrows with our mortal frame, and at once found immortality and joy; and now our happiness is vast as thought, unbounded as our wish, and stable as the hills of bliss!"

Well, well, ye sons of joy! I boast my happiness as well as you. If your felicity be secured in the possession, mine is secured in the promise. He that delivers out of Egypt, also brings safe over Jordan. Once, like me, ye wept, ye mourned, ye stood amazed, and knew not what

to do; so, in a little, I, like you, shall shout and sing, and share eternal peace, and praise the conduct of my glorious Guide. Comforted with these prospects, I will encounter all the changes of a transient state, and fix mine eye on the felicity to come. By faith I will drink at the river that flows from the throne of God; and thus become immortal in my highest hopes, and most endearing prospects, I will bid defiance to all the darts of woe that can teem on me in time. What can changes do to me, since my last and most terrible change shall fix my felicity, and render my best state unchangeable?

IV.—*All things work for good to the saints.*

May I endure as seeing him who is invisible, and having mine eye much on the world to come! Time now passes, and passing time has perplexing scenes; but, O ye citizens of the New Jerusalem, your mountain stands fast, and shall never be moved, and your beloved is in your arms; and an everlasting hallelujah dwells upon your tongue. Here I dwell in the dark, and am much in doubt, nor know what conclusion to draw from the conduct of Providence concerning my present state. I deprecate and pray, and often am at a loss to know my duty. Is there none in your great assembly that could be content that some of your crosses had not taken place in time? and that the divine conduct had been otherwise?

"No, complaining mortal! no. Be it known to thee, and all the mourning throng, that we adore and acquiesce, in all that ever befel us below. Yea, the very providences which crossed us most, and made us almost doubt the love, and disbelieve the promise of God, now, when unfolded in the light of glory, fill our hearts with joy, and our mouths with songs, while we adore the infinite love and amazing wisdom of our God, that made all things work together for our eternal good!"

What! Is there not one in all your numerous assembly that has had dark and unintelligible providences in his lot?

"What, then, presumptuous inquirer? It composes us,

that God, our own God, sent them; and though we should never be able to find out the cause, or be indulged with the mystery unfolded, we are all well pleased to have the strongest impressions of Jehovah's absolute sovereignty, who gives no account of any of his matters to men or angels, thus preserved on our enlarged souls, to all eternity."

Shall I not, then, from this time, O Lord, claim thee as my Father, and the guide of my life? Thousands and ten thousands, by thy divine conduct, are safely arrived at bliss, and not a complaint on their tongue, not a murmur in their mind at one step in all the rugged way.

V.—*A soul converted, joy among the angels.*

Dec. 6, 1763.

WHAT meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of heaven? What! ye holy angels, there cannot be war in your borders, or death in your immortal family? "No, but one of our blessed number is just now arrived from ministering to the saints on earth, and brings the joyful tidings, that a sinner is converted, an heir of glory born, and therefore joy sparkles in every angelic countenance, and triumphs in our rapturous hallelujahs. Let this day be marked in the records of heaven, in the annals of eternity; and may to-morrow be as this day, and much more abundant."

Hail, happy day, when the conversion of my friend, that shares my daily prayers, shall cause joy among the angels of God; yea, when God the Saviour shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied! Methinks I see the rosy dawn of divine power, when the soul that once resisted Jesus flies into his arms. Then the pleasing dreams fly away, and the unseen world presents itself to view. Then the peace of God, and peace of conscience, are prized above all the things of fame. Wherefore do I doubt, since thy name is salvation, thy word enlivening, thy merits infinite, thy call at every hour, and all thy bowels love?

Again the heavenly arches ring, "Another captive

won from hell, another sinner converted from the error of his way; and who can tell but it is my absent friend! Let all the ransomed throng exalt the riches of free and sovereign grace, while all my powers are swallowed up of astonishment and love!

VI.—*Earth not our home.*

Sept. 16, 1764.

WHY am I so fond of the land wherein I am a stranger, of the place of my exile? The decease of all my ancestors proves this; not one of them is this day alive, and I fall the next by course. O to get this world under my feet, that it may not lie a dead weight on me in my last moments! This is the land of graven images, and every image dares compute with the things of the unseen world; for relations claim to have as much of my affection as Christ; time, to be as oft in my thoughts as eternity; and the earth to engross my concern as much as heaven.

Now the men of the world think I am at home; but the expectant of glory will not own his home beneath the sun; for it is but a coldrife home where sin and satan dare appear, God is seldom seen, and the tenant is often weeping; but, O blessed inhabitants! who dwell where the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple, the Lord God and the Lamb are the Light, and the joy of the whole land. You not only dwell in heaven, but heaven dwells in you, while earth and hell struggle hard for room in my heart, and, alas! too, too oft prevail. Compassionate Redeemer! when shall thy stranger arrive at these realms of day, and join the sinless throng that worship at thy throne, and never, never, sin?

VII.—*We should live above the world.*

O DIVINE Lover! O divine love! how wonderful are thy works! Six or eight thousand years ago, there was not one adorer to be found before thy throne; but

now how are the courts of the great King thronged! and thousands and ten thousand daily worship at the throne! and by and by not only the angels of light, but the heirs of love, shall all sit down in the kingdom of their Father. Then shall I get full views of thee, O thou darling of thy Father, thou desire of all nations, and light of the world above! Men and angels were created to be happy in thee, and got their beings that thou mightest be glorified, and they might be blessed; but men and angels fell, of the human race all, that some might be redeemed; of the angelic some, that none should be recovered. O wisdom infinite! O sovereign love! Then, not only being and bliss have I from thee in creation, but in the wonderful work of redemption. And yet I am a stranger to my divine Redeemer! O when shall I come and stand before thy throne? As fast as the chariot of time can drive, I am posting to the unseen world, but how shall I be ashamed that I had not one meditation before me; and chiefly, O thou glory of thy Father's house, that I had not more acquaintance with thee? To sit at thy feet, will bless my eternity; and to talk of thy love, will heighten my joy; then, let me just dwell before thee in time, and with my spirit within me seek thee early. Should not love be my daily theme, which shall be the table-talk at the marriage-supper of the Lamb through eternity? Do I believe that this world and I must part, and that at odds? how then will the expectant of glory like to get the lie from lying vanity? It is best here to be first in the quarrel, to fall out with the world, so as not to leave it one affection, but have them set on things above.

VIII.—*Joy awaits the saints.*

1765.

Can I take it ill, Fountain of joy! that I sorrow now a little, since in a little, like those who walk in white robes, with crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, I shall be in an ecstacy of joy for ever? When I am brought from the house of mourning, to make my solemn entrance into the King's palace, it will be with gladness and rejoicing. All my powers of mind will be

entranced at my admission into thy beatific presence! All the heavenly graces will sing in concert at receiving the crown of perfection! All the angels of light will welcome me with joy to their great Master's house! and the whole church of the first-born will shout my happy accession to the purchased throne!

Yet, for all this, my welcome would be but dry, and their song but dull, didst not thou, O Jehovah! rejoice over me! didst thou not rest in thy love, and joy over me with SINGING. How can hosts or angels look sad, if their Maker joy? How can the heavens be silent, if Jehovah sing? All thine attributes, all thy perfections shall harmonize in my salvation. Mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, shall meet and kiss, and shout and sing. O what astonishing transports and entrancing melody shall fill the highest heavens! where, O amazing! where the subject of our songs, and object of our love, shall himself be the sweetest singer, because he does every thing according to the grandeur of a God.

IX.—*The joy of saints unseen.*

How do the men of the world mistake religion, and think the Christian dull and melancholy, dumpish, and morose! But, O Fountain of my joy! thou knowest what divine delight I find in my retired moments I only lament that I am not more alone, or, when alone, that I am not more with thee. The request of the spouse shall be mine—Come, my beloved, let me get up early from an enchanting world, let me go forth from the vanities of time, let me lodge in the humble village of solitude, let me walk in the flowing field of the promise, and there will I give thee my loves. In these sweet moments heaven smiles in my face, and my soul exults in God. I grasp at my expected bliss, and taste the joys on high.

X.—*Heaven the best inheritance.*

A DIVIDED sea, and a flaming Sinai, falling manna, and a friendly cloud, were wonders of old; but, O what

a wonder this, that the God of glory should come down to give wings to worms of the earth to bear them to the skies! Amazing! to see insects soar above the stars, and arrive at the realms of day! When, O when shall I also join the shining multitude that sits on Zion's hill?—But there is not one crawling insect in all the heavenly country. So, though I be a worm below, while I rise to the throne, I shall rise into an angel in the assimilating beam.

Truly, O King eternal! my faith sees that the land of promise is a pleasant land, and that thy presence makes heaven a desirable habitation. Let the men of the earth contend about thy footstool; I will not be satisfied with any thing beneath thy throne. What is a province, what is a kingdom, what is an empire, what a continent, what the whole world to an inheritance in the highest heaven! To thy honour, O thou King of kings! all thy glorified subjects are both altogether and always kings. In thy favor they are exalted, and none shall ever drive them from their state. A portion, or division, of the Arabian desarts, would have been no compliment to the tribes who were travelling toward the land of promise! nor shall I much esteem a plot of this enchanting world, who desire to be only charmed with my heavenly possession.

O pleasant country! O land of delight! where the winter is past, and eternal summer dwells! Sin dares not pass the frontiers of Immanuel's land; sorrow and sickness dare not invade the seats of bliss. Shall I hereafter inhabit the land where sin shall no more infest it? I who have been in hot wars with it all my life! Shall, then, a land that is within the sea-mark of wrath, engage my attention, or gain my esteem, when my native country is so very near? I have but a little way to go till I pass over Jordan, and enter into mine eternal possession, not of Canaan, not of paradise, not of heaven, but of Jehovah and the Lamb, where I shall enjoy all thy communicable fulness, ages without end.

Enemies Overthrown.

THOUGH Israel was, without doubt, safe under the conduct of the man of God, while recoiling seas left their bed a passage for the ransomed tribes, and the angel and the cloud interposed between the heirs of promise, and the hardened pursuers; yet when their enemies are no more, but their lifeless bodies, which caused their terror in the land of the living, are lying on the shore, how do they sing and boast in their divine Deliverer! Even so, though under thy conduct, O Captain of salvation! I am safe in spite of earth and hell at my heels, in spite of sin and corruption rising in my heart; yet how desirable is it to enter into the land of rest! how pleasant to join the triumphant throng, who have put off their armour, and on their crowns; dropped the spear, and taken up the palm! In a word how sweet, how ineffably sweet to cease from sin!

Thou knowest I desire to depend on promised grace, and in the strength thereof to cut my way through all my enemies; but I also desire to pant for promised glory, when not an enemy shall be found in all the heavenly world. Hail happy day, when death, spiritual death, that choaked my graces, and slew my comforts, and hell, even sin and satan, shall be cast into the lake of fire. To believe in thee is my duty while below, but to behold thee will be my bliss above. Faith and hope refresh and support me in the militant state, but vision and fruition shall transport and ravish me for ever. Indeed my defence is the same, but the sense of my security differs. Though grace shall rise into glory, yet often my faith of this is shaken, and a heavy tumult ensues in my soul; but when crowned with glory, and seated before thy throne, I shall sin no more, I shall fear no more, but enjoy divine ecstasies, sacred tranquillity, and all the pleasures of the land of love.

XII.—*The exercise of the blessed.*

O YE heavenly hosts, how are you this night, employed?—"In beholding him, and blessing him, in seeing him, and singing to him. We look on him, and love him; we look to him and are enlightened; we see him, and are like him; no fatigue deadens our devotions, no weakness inclines us to repose; we are immortal, and our theme is eternal; so we cannot be wearied, and it cannot be exhausted!"

What high and beautiful flights are in your songs, then, O ye redeemed from among men! O the ravishing accents of the hosannahs above, and the raptures of the hallelujah on high! O the sweetness of the song of Moses and the Lamb, and the melody of the mingling notes of men and angels! O the sublime subject of the anthem, and the eternity of the concert! "True, O man! for our day knows no night, our song no pause, our vision no vail, our sun no cloud, our light no shadow, our strength no decay, our felicity no period, our love no allay, and our eternity no end!"

Did ye see, O ye exalted ones! would ye not pity us the sons of men, to find us so anxious and eager in the pursuit of lying vanities, as if eternity were come down to time, or the things of time could suit eternity? Ye are honouring Christ to the highest, for he is in your soul, and in your song; in your love; and in your eye. O blessed exercise! O excellency of bliss! The Most High, in the highest heaven, in the brightest display of his glory, in the sweetest manifestations of his love, is the subject of your song, the object of your adorations, and the plenitude of your possession! My rest would be your uneasiness; for I must fall asleep in order to bear the toils of a perishing world, but ye rest not day nor night, and yet are sufficient for the ecstasies of an eternal heaven! These are the years of the right hand of the Most High; the days of the exalted Son of man, one of which I long to see. O the strength that flows from that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" the more weight the more might!

Oh! at an immense distance I only look toward that land of bliss, but have I any thing to do with your joys;

methinks I claim them all. That God is my God by the same relation to whom I shall shortly come; that immortality I shall shortly put on; I shall shortly join in that song, possess that glory, plunge into that bliss, be satisfied with that likeness, see that well-beloved of my soul, burn in that love, share of that fulness, and enter into that joy! Therefore, in this low condition, it shall be consolation to me to meditate on the sublime employment of the higher house, till I am transported thither.

XIII.—*Complaints of spiritual languor.*

O LORD these many years I have pretended to love thee. I have indeed tasted that thou art gracious; but, alas! how can I say that I love thee, when my heart is not with thee? Can I love thee and not long for thee? Surely it is the nature of love to be impatient and restless till possessed of the object beloved, yet how little do I long for thee! How can I dwell with so much contentment at such a distance from thee! I am not only astonished, but terrified at myself. O lukewarm heart! O lifeless lover that I am! is this my kindness to my friend? Did I esteem the smiles of thy face, and the light of thy countenance as I should, I could not dwell with so much pleasure in the land of darkness. Did I regard the honor of thy name as I ought, the daily sight of thine enemies would be my daily grief, and to find myself so often acting the enemy against my dearest Lord, and best friend, would be my continual lamentation and burden. Is it possible I can be an heir of God, an expectant of glory, and not pant after communion with God? Ah! in what delusive dream have I hitherto been held! Is the whole creation able to balance the loss of one moment in heaven? Shall I dwell so long at Jerusalem, and not long to enter into the palace to see the King's face! O thou chiefest among ten thousand! strike off my fetters, and captivate my love. Divide thy heavens, and let mine eye of faith look in, and my soul will follow mine eye.

Why should I, when invited to a crown of heavenly glory, like Saul, hide myself among the stuff of worldly cares? What a struggle have I with stubborn sense, and

present things, a carnal mind, and a weak faith, with cold desires, and languid love! O to be enriched with that faith which is the substance of all that a believer can hope for, the evidences and earnest of all the divine excellencies of the unseen world? Then, my faith shall work by love, and my love shall go out on God, and I in very deed long to be for ever with the Lord!

XIV.—*Preparation for heaven.*

WERE I to go abroad, with all my substance, and spend the remainder of my days in another land, would not some things gain my attention? 1. I would study the language of the country, that I might converse with the inhabitants in their own dialect. 2. I would get all the knowledge I could of the laws, liberties, &c. of those among whom I were to take up my fixed abode. 3. I would use my utmost endeavour to contract acquaintance, and establish a friendship with the men of the place. And, 4. If possible, would get recommended to the favor and protection of the lord of the land. Alas, then! am I less provident for heaven than I would be for earth?

Ye inhabitants of the heavenly Canaan, how will ye stare at me, if I enter your assembly an utter stranger to your songs? My trifling discourse, and carnal converse, will sound and smell rank of hell, in the courts of heaven! Oh! am I to converse through eternity in the language of love, and yet not know a letter below? 2. Am I to be under the laws of thy sceptre, O King of saints! and not know that God is love! O! now to be searching into the privileges of that land which I am to inhabit, not for the short term of life, but for eternity itself; where I shall see the King in his beauty, and share of the divine fulness of my exalted Head. 3. Would I be acquainted with the church of the first-born, and all the angels of light (and, ye happy ones, I hope to join you soon;) then only in our employment we contract acquaintance, for while we worship at the same throne, and behold the same amiable Being, faith and vision having like effects, we are companions in love, and associates in work! and are assimilated to the glorious object we be-

hold. And, 4. Since in the smiles of thy countenance I shall find my eternal heaven, how should I esteem thy favour above life, and ardently breathe after communion with thee below! I may dwell in any country here, and neither know nor be known of the king; but so I cannot in thy land, O Immanuel! for unless I know and be known personally to the King, I will not have one known face in all the world of spirits!

XV.—*The Eternal Sabbath.*

How is it that I, who pretend to love thee, should ever be wearied with a Sabbath-day's devotion? If the body is fatigued, or the spirits exhausted, how shall I stand under much intenser ardours, through eternity itself? What say ye, ye adorers round the throne? do ye never long to rest from your divine employment? "O poor mortal! how ignorant art thou of our frame, our faculties, our felicity and strength! The rest thou speakest of would be our torment; an intermission of praise would pierce us with the severest pangs of anguish. Didst thou see him as we do, thou wouldst wholly melt in admiration, dissolve in love, and pour forth in praise, and never cease, and never tire through eternity itself."

O Father of lights! pity my darkness, and enlighten me! O fountain of life! pity my deadness, and enliven me! While I call in mine own experience to convince me, that the saints in glory never are fatigued or dulled in their divine exercises, have not I had some happy moments, of which I did not weary? Now when in my best frames, I have found it so for a short while, but corruption and infirmity daily distressing me altered all, else I should have found it so for a long time. But in heaven the spiritual frame is fixed, and infirmity and corruption are no more; therefore, with equal ease and vigor I will worship God through eternity, as I would one hour on earth. Well may the fire of love continually burn in heaven, having fresh fuel added to it by the hand of God; well may my soul follow *hard* after thee, being upheld by the arm of thine Omnipotence. Then to worship at thy throne shall be both the *business* and the *bliss* of my eter-

nity. When once I have tasted what it is to rest in the bosom of God, to drink the spiced wine of bliss, to hold communion in the holy of holies, and to worship at the highest throne, then all created beings joined together will not drive me one moment from my dear enjoyment and divine employ! Roll on, thou longed-for day, when I shall mourn no more over feeble nature, and the short-lived frame, a hiding Jesus and imperfect love; but rise to ardors only known above, and, full of heaven, go wholly out on God.

XVI.—*Indifference to the world.*

It is a certain truth that countenances are something a-kin to climates; hence the visages of some reveal their country: even so my soul has but a dusky colour, an earthly hue, because earth engrosses all my thoughts, my cares and concern. O how little converse have I with the unseen world! how little communion with God! One step into the future world will render this as if it had never been, and my first step may be it, since I walk on the frontiers of each world. Because this world will cheat me, shall I cheat myself? It will be a costly pledge, to give it my soul till I yield my body to its bowels. Wherein shall the expectant of glory excel others, if his causes and cures of joy and grief are the same? Should one who would fain be conversant about a world to come, so much concern himself with wind and vanity, dust and ashes? Bags of white and yellow dust may bring me to court here, but the whole world on my back, will not procure me entrance into the palace of the King Eternal. When arrived at the seats of bliss, it will not matter whether my journey was in the fair day of prosperity and fame, or in the tempestuous day of affliction and disgrace. Both are forgotten in glory. But if I love God, I will long to be with him, for I shall never get my fill of love in a foreign land. Well, death is fast approaching, and the wondrous hour that divides Jordan. Both deliver me from the howling desart, and possess me of the land of promise. Under such a prospect, well may I with cheerfulness give up the ghost, saying, *Into thy hand I commit my spirit.*

XVII.—*The disembodied saint.*

1765.

WHITHER, dear angels, whither do ye carry my soul just disembodied? "Commissioned from thy Father's throne, we come to carry thee safe into his immediate presence." What dismal howling is that I hear behind us? "It is the last yells of hell's old lion, at thy safe escape."—Ah! where am I now? what wonders rise around me! what fragrance meets me from the mountains of myrrh, from the hills of frankincense! I hear the voice of my beloved; sacred guardians, let me leave you, and fly into his arms! Am I he who lately lay tumbling and tossing on a death-bed, who now walk in beds of roses, and on banks of bliss? Am I he who a little ago had none around his bed, but weeping friends, and concerned spectators, who now am surrounded with song, entranced with harmony, and ravished with delights? Am I, who lately lay struggling with the pangs, and trembling at the approach of dissolution, now above the reach of fear, and stroke of death?

But, O thou Majesty of heaven! I blush at my very entrance into thy courts, that I have been such a stranger here. Enoch, the divine Enoch, is a wonder in the upper world, he had so much of God with him on earth, he brought so much of heaven with him to heaven; he came not from earth to heaven, but from one heaven to another. What precious time and sweet meditation have I wasted on toys and trifles, and despised the joy of angels and the work of heaven! Where are all the things of time now, which could once dispute the possession of my heart with God? Why did not thy perfections feast my meditations? why did not thy love attract, constrain mine? why did not the joys of heaven drown the fanciful joys, and dissipate the imaginary sorrows of the world? why did I prostitute the temple of my soul to the idols of time? why permit the *world* and *self* a place in that temple which the Godhead is to inhabit for ever? There are none before the throne but supreme lovers of God, a name I dare not claim; then, let me retire to the outmost confines of the land of bliss, as unworthy to be nearer. Ah! no; at thy throne I will

dwell for ever, and glow in ardors, and dissolve in love. And the sacred spark, which sin and satan, the world and self, smothered while below, shall burn a flame intense and strong through everlasting day.

SHALL I chaunt, or shall I complain? Even my complaints praise thee: it is thy kindness opens my mouth. Had I been thrown into hell, my revenge had been against the throne of God; but while I find myself in the arms of bliss, with what language shall I condemn my conduct in time! Was I content to have dwelt on the other side of Jordan for ever? to put up with a fool's paradise for eternity! O! why did not my soul go out more after God? why did not my love center on him alone? how could I treat my best, my heavenly friend, worse than a common traveller! My house received the one, but my heart bolted out the other! How mean was mine esteem of the fairest one that ever angels saw, or seraphs sung! O that ever trifling avocations should have called my meditations off that work that would have kindled my love and heightened my joy! Why did I look always through a false medium, on every thing that concerned me? Is it possible that this vast inheritance of glory could appear in mine eyes a little despicable island, that lay beyond an unknown ocean? O! hast thou bestowed on me the boundless inheritance of bliss, who once gave mine affections so much to a few miles square on thy footstool, that lay within the sea-mark of corruption and the curse? Was my love ardent to every other object but the God of love! Oh! was mine esteem proportionate to their excellency, yea, was it not beyond what all their excellencies put together deserved, yet dead and dull, low and languid to the Father of lights, and Fountain of perfections? Why did not the fire of love burn continually with a most vehement flame, a flame that many waters could not quench? Why did I not consider that thou wast love, and that this world, where I am now arrived, was a land of love, and that the song of the redeemed is just the warmest breathings of divinest love, "To him that loved us?" O what a hard, adamantine heart was mine, that in the midst of so many spicy flames

was not melted into love! But here the furnace is seven times heated, and the cloudless emanations of eternal love make every grateful power of mind rise to the throne of God, like savory incense from the smoaking altar.

CAN I ever forget, in this exalted state, my folly when in time? How unbecoming for an heir of heaven to take so much thought about the earth! Did my faith believe that such immense treasures were reserved for me in the land of promise; and yet my unbelief distract me about the trifles of a day? Where now is the advantage of all my corroding cares, and disquieting forethoughts? How unbecoming for one whose strength was the *joy of the Lord*, to feel grief for the perishing things of time! Why did I take it in bad part to be poor in a world, where my dearest Saviour, whose hands founded the golden mines, beautified the sparkling diamond, and enriched the precious stones with brilliant glow, lived and died in extreme indigence? Why did any sorrow that was bounded by time, and ended in death, disquiet my immortal part? Whatever I lost in time being of a perishing nature, could not enrich me now; and it matters not what be now and then burnt, where all is devoted to fire.

ANOTHER error I was guilty of in the days of my pilgrimage below, was joy in the world; and yet all that I was possessed of, when I came to the hour of death, could neither avert the stroke, nor mitigate the pangs of dissolution. How like the sons of sense and earth, to rejoice in that which is bestowed on the basest of men, and often tends to the basest of ends! Neither the angel nor the animal regard the golden sum; and yet was I, whose animal life could not be supported by such, nor mine angelic expectations terminate there, bewitched with shining dust? How lonely had my passage been, O best Beloved, through the valley of death, for all the treasures of the world, without thy presence! With triumph I walk along the golden street, and with endless joy trample the shining metal, that durst once invade my heart.

and decoy my affections from divine things! Ah! was I ever so stupid, so brutish, as to make any comparison between *riches* and *righteousness*, *gold* and *glory*, *earth* and *heaven*, the *creature* and *God?* Now I would not stop my song one moment to give laws to the whole world, nor stir one foot from the throne of God, to sway the sceptre over the nations. Now I am happier than the nobles, higher than the kings of any land!

1766.

O KING Eternal, how am I changed since I came into thy presence! the emanations of thy cloudless glory have made me exceeding fair; and thou hast bestowed upon me excellent majesty. Whence is this, for a worm of thy footstool to rise into an angel before thy throne, and grow fairer and fairer in thy assimilating beams? Sin would not know me now, that often blackened my conscience, and saddened my countenance, for now my conscience *sings*, and my countenance *shines*, having full redemption in his blood. Who would say that ever my heart, which is now a garden inclosed for my well-beloved, was a field of battle, where the company of two armies daily set the battle in array? Fellow-sufferers would not know me now, but take me for an ancient inhabitant of the land of bliss, and not for one that lately sojourned in Mesech, and dwelt in the tents of Kedar. O what an heavenly change, what a divine metamorphosis is this! in which all my powers of mind so deeply share. In the day of grace it was much to be like David the man of God; but now in the year of glory, I am like the *angel of God;* ah! deeper wonder still! *like the God of angels!* Hosanna, Hallelujah! Selah.

No wonder that in the world I did not think more of salvation and the work of redemption, for I dwelt in darkness, and tabernacled in clay; but since I have entered within the vail, and come into the presence of God himself, the mystery is revealed, and my enlarged powers of mind are oppressed with wonder and amaze! I once

thought that I was something, but since arrived into the more immediate presence of the Being of beings, I see I am very nothing, a mere non-entity! Now, had the shining seraphims left their sparkling seats, and rapturous songs, to lead such *emmets* through the howling wilderness, it would have been a wonder; but for him, at whose throne the prostrate angels fall, and on whose glory Gabriel cannot look, the Father's fellow, the God of angels, the fountain of happiness, and the king of heaven, to descend to time, to clothe himself with flesh, to humble himself to death, and to encounter all the storms of his Father's tremendous wrath! and that for the very wretches that rebelled against him, is, and will be the wonder of eternity!

1767.

HERE in the highest heavens I see the extravagance of my folly, when on the footstool. How did I mourn for my expiring friend, as if I had never heard of immortality, and sorrow for the dead as one that had no hope! To what purpose were my tears, mine anguish and my wounded heart? did I dispute the will of God, or envy them their bliss? did such sadness in my countenance make my heart better? Why did not faith behold afar off this happy day, when so few moments intervened between their decease and mine? Now earthly relations are lost, but not forgotten; lost in thy dearer tie and diviner unity of the heavenly family. The dear infant retains not the putrid disease that snatched him from his parents arms, but appears beauteous as the smiling morning, and lovely as the sons of God. Not a gracious relative is lost, but meet here with mutual advantage. In some, imperfect grace and perverse nature might raise domestic storms, and impede their prayers at the throne; while in others, too high esteem and fond delight might prove as fatal to their soul's concerns: but now all sinful defects and lawless excess are removed, and we share in others' bliss, and join in others' songs, triumphing over death and weakness through eternal day!

While walking through the vale of tears, how many have my mournful melancholy Sabbaths been! While sin and satan, objects without, and distractions within, have harrassed, how has the day been profaned, my mind perplexed, and sadness seized on my soul, so that I have often pleaded a visit from the Lord of the Sabbath, and implored his pity against my foes, and longed for this eternal day of rest. Now, what streaming joys dilate my ravished soul, to find myself possessed of everlasting Sabbath! nothing from without, nothing from within, can defile my soul, or distract my devotions. This is the day that I have longed for; and in thy presence, O thou Son of man, O thou majesty of heaven, shall eternity be one Sabbath-day! and all the day shall I worship at thy throne, and the length of the day shall be the delight of my soul; nor shall my sanctified heart need a constant watch, as one against her rovings, seeing it is essential to the perfect state, and heavenly frame, *to go out only on God.*

1769.

The heirs of heaven need not take it amiss that they are mourners while travelling through the fields of Bochim, the vale of Achor. So short is the duration of their sorrow to the eternity of their song, that they have hardly time to heave the deep fetched sigh, till their heart-strings snap, and their joyful soul flies into their heavenly Father's arms, and enters eternally into the joy of their Lord.

Such is now my happy state above; and though in the dark night of time I mistook every mole-hill of trial for mountains of distress, yet it was only the shadow of trouble that attended me, the shadow of grief that way laid me, and the shadow of death that I walked through; so that trouble could not distract me, grief could not destroy me, and death could not devour me. But now even shadowy evil is past, and solid, sure, substantial good is mine. I enjoy the essence of joy, the quintessence of bliss, even God in his own heaven, God in his own Son! noondays of glory, rivers of pleasures, fulness of joy, oceans of ec-

stacy, ages of communion, entrance my every ravished power.

Feb. 1777.

How happy are all the hosts around the throne! how content those who have been often disappointed! how cheerful the mourners, and how happy all the sons of sorrow! Glory is such a weight, God is such a portion, that every power of soul is ravished and blessed above conception. O the fulness of the heavenly bliss! there is neither want nor wo, vanity nor vexation, preying on any soul; but God, in his divine perfections, fills and overfloweth all.

XVIII.—*A check for not meditating on divine things.*

Jan. 1.

Does my faith expect a kingdom, an heavenly kingdom, and a crown of glory that fadeth not away? and can I live days and weeks, months and years, without a real ardent desire to be put in possession of the promised land? I wonder not so much that the wicked think nothing of heaven, (for who admire unknown lands?) as that the saints think so little of it, though now and then allowed to pluck the fruits of paradise! Were the day fixed, on which I should make my appearance at an earthly court, to be created a peer, and continue in my prince's favor and presence ever after till death, how often would my thoughts revolve the auspicious day, and feast on the imaginary, the transitory grandeur! And in the mean time, were it notified to me, that my sovereign would not only permit me, but would take it kindly, and expected that I should often meditate on the majesty of his throne, on the equity of his sceptre, on the immutability of his laws, on the wisdom of his government, on the riches of his treasures, on the sweetness of his favour, on the munificence of his love, on all his admirable perfection, and on the amiable person of the prince-royal, the heir of his crown, and beloved of his soul, I would not need a se-

cond invitation to these meditations. Now, when all these supposed excellencies in an earthly monarch are realized in the King Eternal, and in the King's Son; and I am not only permitted, but invited and commanded to meditate on him, assured that the day is on wing when I shall be brought into the palace of the King, crowned with immortality, and serve him in his temple, evermore; what a shame, what a sin, yea, what a loss is it, that my whole soul, in all her thoughts, meditations, desires, delights, longings, and outgoings, is not of God, and the things of God!

XIX.—*Approbation of trying providences.*

Dec. 1770.

O GOVERNOR of men and angels! how well does it become me to be conformed to the Captain of my salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings! Who ever expected to find bright noon in the dark night, or serene summer in the middle of stormy winter, or grottos, arbors, and flower-gardens, in a barren desart? why then am I surprised that I stumble while travelling in the night, or that it rains and is sometimes very tempestuous in the winter-season? or that I find barrenness in the desart, and lose sight of my fellow-travellers in the dark? I will count my afflictions then, but I dare not quarrel: I will plead for compassion but I will not complain. Death has so often preyed around me, that I only am escaped alone to tell, that I have neither father nor mother, sister nor brother, nephew nor niece, nor any nearer relative. Yet, when the *Son of righteousness* shall arise on me, I shall share an eternal day above the reach of night, a serene summer where winter shall return no more: and a blooming paradise, and arbours of bliss, where there is no barren desart. Also, while I leave all my infirmities, and all my afflictions in the vale of misery behind me, I shall find treasures of glory, rivers of pleasure, in thy presence, fulness of joy at thy right hand for ever: Moreover, I shall find my religious friends in the better country, whose death I now bewail! but verily I believe, I shall lose and overlook them, and all the heavenly crowd, while enter-

tained with better company, and admitted to more divine communion with Jehovah and the Lamb.

XX.—*Faith's triumph over affliction.*

Sept. 26, 1772.

In a little I shall be where I never was before, and where I now am, I shall never be again. With every immortal, I shall be in eternity, and bid a final farewell to time. I shall just be in that heavenly place where my happy meditations now are. In thy presence, O Saviour! at thy throne, O King of kings! shall I find my heaven. Sure, then, it can never become an expectant of so much bliss, to be sad for any thing but sin, or to joy in any thing but in God. When I am no more numbered with the living, but lamented over as a broken vessel, I shall mingle with the hosts of the living God, with the armies of light, and exult in my celestial privilege for ever.

Like the rest of Adam's discontented family, I am often grumbling at my griefs, complaining of my afflictions, and on the brink of quarrelling at the conduct of Providence itself. To be without afflictions is impossible below, where man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward; not to feel when afflicted, is a stoical is an impious stupidity; but to sink under troubles of any kind, is beneath the character of the Christian. Yet, when I reflect on that eternity of bliss which is before me, on that world of glory of which I am an heir in minority, I wonder that my afflictions are not rather more, than that they are so many. Is it much for me to stumble among the rough stones of adversity, to have my flesh pricked with the thorns of trouble, who shall walk the golden streets of heaven, and wear a crown of immortal glory? Though the whole earth should rise up against me, if heaven, and the God of heaven be for me, I am in perfect safety, and may sing my requiem in the midst of all the storms and tempests, whirlwinds and hurricanes, that can blow.

XXI.—*A sweet prospect of future bliss.*

Nov. 20, 1773.

How soon I shall mingle with the inhabitants of the invisible world, I cannot say; but I may assure myself it cannot be long. Why then converse I so seldom with the unseen world? why daily strike my roots deeper into this world, like an old tree, when, like an old tree, I must shortly be cut down? By kind providences, and gracious promises, I am hired to be heavenly-minded, and by afflictions am I chastened for my carnality; but could my faith get one sip of the heavenly banquet, I would long to sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. What a rich feast is found in the kingdom of God, which entertains thousands and ten thousands of happy souls through eternity; and shall my immortal soul feed on the refuse of creation! I tread under foot the flowers of this footstool, and rise in my ambition to the bliss of heaven, to the fruition of God. O what beams of glory shine on me! what treasures open in my view! the all-sufficient *good* enjoyed through everlasting day by all the powers of my expanding, wondered, ravished, and enlarged mind.

XXII.—*The ravishing employment of saints in glory.*

May 22, 1774.

It is owing to the richness of grace, and stability of love, that I do not forfeit my title to the heavenly inheritance, by taking so little delight in divine things, and being so captivated with the perishing creature! O fool that I am! to be busied about dust and ashes, and to delight in a thing of nought; for the whole creation shall at last be set on fire, and deceive for ever all the votaries of sense. Then, when admitted into thy unclouded and beatific presence, what a strange change shall take place in my pursuits? I shall feel a frame of mind superior to the claim of my faith, and my soul shall be filled with raptures never felt, never known below. My soul

shall largely open to the sacred emanations of the Deity, and exert all her ravished powers in searching the divine perfections, and through eternity pursue the blissful theme. Then, and not till then, shall I know what it is to *see God*, to have communion and fellowship in their perfection with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ, and, with saints and angels, to enjoy him in all his inexhaustible fulness. There shall not be an unemployed moment, nor an idle thought here. Crowns and kingdoms shall not excite one wish there (why then should lesser things excite so many wishes now, since I am to be soon so there?) but God's infinite self shall be my all in all through eternity!

XXIII.—*A reprehension for decay in grace.*

Dec. 17, 1775.

With tears of blood might I write bitter lamentations over the deadness of my soul, the darkness of my state! Is the beloved of my soul in heaven, and shall the love of my soul grovel on the earth? Has he who is fairer than the children of men, than the angels of God, lost all his beauty with me? Has he no form nor comeliness that I should desire him, meditate on him, and long for him? O the mad career of my unestablished mind, to hunt after shadows, vanity, wind, and let heaven and glory go! O happy day of glory that is on the wing, when sin shall poison my pursuits no more; but all my soul, with the ardor of heavenly love, and the vigor of perfected grace, shall search the adorable perfections of God.

XXIV.—*The noblest indifference.*

April 13, 1776.

The brevity of time, and the near approach of eternity, give to the rightly-exercised soul a noble indifference about every thing below. What matters it whether I dwell in a palace or a prison, since it is but for a day, an hour, a moment! What disappointment should pain me,

in time, if I shall posses God for eternity? I look around me, und see multitudes eager on the chace, keen in the pursuit of created good, forgetful that the world passeth away. I look forward to the invisible world, and see multitudes in their eternal state, astonished at the stupidity of saints and sinners, that the trifles of a day should with them preponderate so much. I also find myself in the deluded throng of trifiers, and condemn my own conduct. An hundred years ago, O ye disembodied nations, some of you were inhabitants in time, and ere an hundred years hence, I shall dwell in eternity. Ye then straggled along the road of human life with care and concern, with burdens and bitterness, but now are forever at your journey's end; I am now travelling the thorney path, and shall also shortly arrrive at home. Then there shall be no difference between you and me, when both dwelling in the same eternal world; and the interim is so short, that nothing that can befal me should either give pain or pleasure. I am on the wing to the celestial paradise, and no blasts in my face shall hinder my flight to the mount of God. The brevity of time may be bitter to the sinner, because torment and eternity seize him in the same moment; but it must afford me joy, for the shorter my time, the nearer to my endless felicity. Bodies can never be larger than the orbits in which they move; then all the complicate afflictions of time must disappear when time is no more. Why, then, take deep thought, or long sorrów, or much joy, or lasting delight, at the ill or good of a few flying moments. My soul is immortal, and God is eternal; therefore in thee below, and in thee above, in thee in time, and in thee in eternity, shall my soul find boundless pleasures and unfading bliss.

XXV.—*No happiness below.*

Nov. 18, 1777.

Never shall I attain to happiness, while I seek it in the creature, or expect it out of heaven; and O how little concern have I with the things of time, who am so far on my journey towards eternity! When the world gets into the affections, there is nothing but tumult and disor-

der there; this I have long found; but when heaven dwells within, the heart becomes a little heaven, and all is peace and serenity, composure and joy. O! then, to keep the heart barred against enchanting trifles, and to live above every thing below. At the hour of death, I shall make my triumphant entry into the New Jerusalem, and from the walls of the holy city I shall bid defiance to all the cares of life, the pleasures of sense, the armies of corruption, and the legions of hell.

XXVI.—*God a never failing portion.*

Dec. 12, 1778.

With respect to this world, I sleep but a part of every day; but with respect to a world to come, alas! how long is my sleep, how little am I awake! O it is sad to be taken up with dreams and shadows, and to neglect eternal realities! I am happy to be shaken out of my false confidences, and to hang on my heavenly Father alone, and if disappointed in my support, it will not be owing to the instability of my prop, but to my not leaning aright on him. However, I am happy, and I claim to be happy with his rich grace and overflowing love, in spite of all temporal disasters, should the whole of my time be one series of disappointments, one continued tempest and storm, since the hour of death brings me safe to the other shore, where the enjoyment of God and the Lamb shall replenish my whole soul.

XXVII.—*God claims the whole heart.*

May 30, 1779.

O to have communion with God in all things, and at all times; and for this end I should keep for him my heart. If I am visited of a great friend, I must not speak twice to an impertinent neighbor that intrudes into our company, and but once to him, lest he take it amiss and depart; I must not give some rascally acquaintance the chief seat in the best part of the room, and set him in the corner,

lest he grow angry, and be gone. Just so, God expects my heart, claims my meditations, and is affronted when he is not in all my thoughts. O! then, to get my idols destroyed, my meditations swept of vanities, and my heart wholly kept for God.

XXVIII.—*The best employment.*

June 13, 1779.

To prepare for a world to come may well employ me while in this world, and the sweet hopes of the heavenly paradise may well support me while travelling through this earthly wilderness; and when I arrive there, it thall not diminish my bliss, that in my pilgrimage I had sometimes storms and tempests in my face, clouds and thick darkness around me, troubles and dangers in my way, aliens and enemies as my companions by the way, and that I was often walking without any company at all, or with company worse than none. When I arrive there, I shall get such a view of the wisdom that conducted me along, that I shall not only approve of it, but admire, adore, and sing of it for ever.

XXIX—*On the death of friends.*

Dec. 9, 1731.

If we love to converse with our friends, or where the greatest part of our friends dwell, surely I should love to converse much with the unseen world, where almost all my friends are. Several years ago, death swept off all my father's family, but him who now laments a second stroke, by which the complete half of my little family (the child of mine own body, and the wife of my bosom) is carried into the unseen world. Thus Providence has torn my family to pieces, blasted my pleasant prospects, plucked up the olive-plant that might have graced my table, and cut down the fruitful vine that flourished by my house-sides, and thus made desolate all my company, so that I have no near friend to consult with about the affairs of

this world, or the concerns of the unseen world. Now, if there was no other state than this, no other world but the present, surely my situation were extremely melancholy; but there is a future state, an unseen world, that balances all. So, while the tear starts in mine eye from affection to my friends, a triumph rises in my heart, from a faith of their felicity. The days of my mourning will come to an end, but their happiness and hosannahs are eternal!

XXX.—*Divine wisdom in our various lots.*

Nov. 12, 1783.

The wisdom of the gardener is seen in the disposition of his plants; some he sets in the sun, others in the shade; some in a rich, fat soil, others in a dry and barren ground; and thus the nursery-man's skill is conspicuous, for each thrives best in its own soil. Then, since Infinite Wisdom has allotted a great part of my life to sorrow and solitude (not that I complain) I may see that I could not grow in another soil. O that I be not unfruitful in this! Behind the high wall of adversity, and in the shade of affliction, the saints will bring forth fruits (humility, self-denial, resignation, patience, &c.) that cannot grow *so well* in the sun-beams of prosperity. Now, if another soil would be more agreeable to me, I should rather seek to change my nature than my station; for, were I that active vigorous plant that would abound in fruits under a bright sun, and in a rich soil, and not grow too luxuriant through pride, shake off my unripe fruits through carnality, or rot through sloth and security, the heavenly husbandman would soon transplant me there, for he does not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men. No matter though, with respect to the things of time, I grow in the shade, if the Sun of righteousness shine on my soul, and make every grace to flourish. He knows better what lot is best for me than I do myself: and, in choosing it for me, I am rather to admire his wisdom, than complain of his conduct; the more so, when I consider that, on a barren soil, and in a lonely shade, he can rear

plants that shall enjoy the noon of communion, and bask in the eternal beams of glory.

XXXI.—*The mind too little on heaven.*

Jan. 1, 1786.

Alas! how little do I converse with myself, how little with the unseen world, how little with God! and yet what various events in adorable Providence call for my attention! With God there is a time to give, and a time to take; a time to remove, and a time to restore; a time to afflict, and a time to comfort; but all these things point me to my latter end, and admonish me to converse with the unseen world. Now, what solid consolation may this yield to me, that he who is my best friend, is Supreme Governer over all; and will shortly, through all events, bring me to the eternal enjoyment of himself!

XXXII.—*The duty of the aged saint.*

March 1, 1793.

The kind providences of my lot, command my gratitude to Heaven, my entire dependance on his arm, and peace and composure in my breast. But the heavenly promises of being brought home to glory, and satisfied for ever with his likeness, may shed a little heaven through my breast; and that I am so far advanced in life, may rather cheer than distress me. O how vain and uncertain is this world, but how sweet and sure the unseen world, towards which I look! When Hezekiah got the message of his death, he turned away his face from his courtiers, his officers of state, and his attendants, towards the wall, for none of our friends can attend us through the dark valley; so in view of my approaching dissolution, I should turn my face, my affections, away from all created things. I am now, like the Israelites, arrived on the very banks of Jordan, and just waiting for the command to pass over; and till that day come, I wish by the eye of faith to take pleasant and repeated views of the unseen

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world, to wean me from this wil... land to me, and to encourage me in view of passing over the river. Israel dwelt forty years in the desart, but when they left it, they left it for good and all, and never pitched a tent there again, or expressed the least desire of returning thither; just so, though I should dwell seventy years in this weary world, yet when called away, O with what cheerfulness will I quit the land of my pilgrimage, the place of mine exile, and when gone, I shall be gone for ever, and raise a triumphant song at being entered on mine everlasting rest; and being set for ever free from sin and earth, from infirmity and death

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XXXIII.—*Afflictions will attend us to our last.*

Dec. 16, 1794.

SHOULD I be surprised at suffering like them that have gone before me! However numerous or uncommon some of my afflictions may be, I thereby am conformed to the happy souls before the throne, who came out of great tribulation and fiery trials. I am to acquit Sovereignty in the kind (though I may be ready to say, Is there any trouble like my trouble wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me?) and in the continuance of my afflictions, while only sin in the instrument, and sin in myself, are to cause me daily grief. But Divine Love, Infinite Wisdom, and Sovereign grace, can turn this shadow of death into the morning, and out of this roaring lion bring forth food to my soul.

THE END.

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